



1 nephi 11–14

the visions of nephi

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Introduction



The image of a small portion of Michelangelo's fresco, "Creation," found above serves as metaphor for this page's means and ends.

- ? How would you characterize God's arm in the fresco?
- ? How would you characterize Adam's arm?
- ? What is the message in Adam's limp wrist? In the fact that his arm rests on his knee?
- ? How does Adam, as painted in Michelangelo's fresco, represent all of us as we engage in scripture study and seek to understand scripture, scripture's divine author and our relationship to Him?
- ? How does Adam, as painted in Michelangelo's fresco, represent all of us as we seek God's enlivening, strengthening, and saving influence and presence in our daily lives?

Michelangelo reminds us of our desperate need for God's presence in our lives if we are to follow Him and be all that He hopes us to be. In relation to this page and its purposes, we are in need of God's help as we seek to understand and apply scripture.

The questions we posed and our brief commentary concerning the fresco represent an example of our approach to each scripture reading.

Scripture readings are accompanied by general and passage-specific questions to ponder along with brief comments. In addition to the passage-specific questions associated with each reading, the reader can apply the following **general questions** to most readings. These questions come from the purposes of scripture as identified in the introduction to our site, ponderthescriptures.com, found on the site's home page

- What does this reading reveal about the character of God?
- How and what does this reading testify of Christ?
- What wisdom and knowledge does this reading provide?
- How does this reading direct the way you think and act?
- Of what dangers does this reading warn? How does it help you avoid these dangers?
- How does this reading gladden your heart, encourage you, and give you hope?
- How does this reading expand your vision and increase your expectations of the possible?
- What does this reading discern or "read" about you?
- How will you apply this reading to your life, to how you relate with others, and to how you relate to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?

It is not intended that the reader ponder every question. We introduce numerous and varied questions in hopes that readers will find a question or two that catches their imagination and interest, seems pertinent to their lives, and provides an opportunity for meaningful pondering and further spiritual insight. In addition, if the reader wishes, the many and varied ponder questions allow the reader to spend additional time to consider passages from various perspectives.

Finally, we suggest that during and after your reading and pondering experience you consider how you

can incorporate your thoughts and feelings from the scripture reading into your personal prayer life. As you pray, share with Heavenly Father what you thought and felt as you studied and pondered. In your prayer, seek further insight from a God who is anxious to reveal himself, his will, and his interest in our lives. Incorporating your reading and pondering into your prayers can, we think, enliven a prayer life that can all too easily become mundane, mechanical, and rote.

1 nephi 11–14— the visions of nephi (11.¹⁻³): questionnaire 1

¹*After I had desired to know the things that my father had seen, and believing that the Lord was able to make them known unto me, as I sat pondering in mine heart I was caught away in the Spirit of the Lord, yea, into an exceedingly high mountain, which I never had before seen, and upon which I never had before set my foot. ²And the Spirit said unto me: “Behold, what desirest thou?”

³And I said: “I desire to behold the things which my father saw.”

1 Nephi 11-14 represent a series of revelations Nephi received in response to his desire to understand the meaning and significance of his father’s dream, often referred to as “The Tree of Life Vision.”

Based on a literary pattern found within Nephi’s series of visions, we understand Nephi to have received 14 visions.¹ We explore this pattern as we work our way through the narrative. In order to have manageably short readings, we have divided the 14 visions into 33 separate daily readings.

The first eight visions focus on Christ and his earthly ministry. With the ninth vision Nephi saw Jesus’ death by crucifixion and that its “inspiration” came from a competing and opposing force, symbolized by the great and spacious building. Beginning with this ninth vision, Nephi’s visions explore the opposition the building represents to God and how he responds to that opposition.

Today’s reading is the first in this series, and the first of two readings that explore the first of fourteen visions.

1. Whether or not he had consciously and purposefully done them with an understanding that they were preparatory to receiving revelation, Nephi mentions three things he had been doing leading up to the Spirit’s appearance.
 - ? What were those three things?
 - ? What role do desire, faith, and pondering play in receiving revelation?
2. Spirit asked, “What do you want.”
 - ? What role do inspired questions play in our receiving revelation?
 - ? What does it mean to ponder, and what does it look like?
 - ? How can you utilize pondering more meaningfully so as to more consistently receive revelation?
3. Nephi says that he “was caught away... into an exceedingly high mountain, which I never had before seen, and upon which I never had before set my foot.”
 - ? What might be the significance of his being taken to a mountain?
 - ? What might be the significance of his never having seen or visited the mountain before?

¹ The 14 visions, of varying lengths, are: 11.¹⁻⁷; 11.⁸⁻¹¹; 11.¹²⁻¹⁸; 11.¹⁹⁻²³; 11.²⁴⁻²⁵; 11.²⁶⁻²⁹; 11.³⁰; 11.³¹; 11.³²⁻³⁶; 12.¹⁻¹⁰; 12.¹¹⁻²³; 13.¹⁻¹⁴; 14.⁹⁻¹⁷; 14.¹⁸⁻³⁰

1 Nephi 11–14— the visions of Nephi (11.⁴⁻⁷): questionnaire 2

⁴*And the Spirit said unto me: “Believest thou that thy father saw the tree of which he hath spoken?”

⁵And I said: “Yea, thou knowest that I believe all the words of my father.”

⁶And when I had spoken these words, the Spirit cried with a loud voice, saying: “Hosanna to the Lord, the most high God; for he is God over all the earth, yea, even above all. And blessed art thou, Nephi, because thou believest in the Son of the most high God; wherefore, thou shalt behold the things which thou hast desired. ⁷And behold this thing shall be given unto thee for a sign, that after thou hast beheld the tree which bore the fruit which thy father tasted, thou shalt also behold a man descending out of heaven, and him shall ye witness; and after ye have witnessed him ye shall bear record that it is the Son of God.”

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Today’s reading is the second in this series, and the second of two readings that explore the first of fourteen visions.

1. Rather than asking Nephi if he believed his father saw *the dream* he claims to have seen, the Spirit asked Nephi if he believed Lehi really saw *the tree* he claims to have seen
 - ? What, do you think, is the significance of this observation?
 - ? As you contemplate the many important elements of Lehi’s dream, why should the tree be considered the central and most important one of all?
2. After Nephi confessed that he believed “all the words of [his]father” the Spirit exalts in the fact that Nephi “believest in the Son of the most high God.”
 - ? Why does the Spirit connect Nephi’s belief in his father’s dream with belief in Jesus Christ?
 - ? What is the connection between the tree and Jesus Christ?
 - ? What does the juxtaposition of Nephi seeing the tree with his seeing of the Son of God suggest as we consider the meaning of the tree?
 - ? As you continue through Nephi’s tutorial, consider how the Spirit keeps drawing Nephi’s attention to episodes in Jesus Christ’s history, and what this signifies for understanding the meaning and import of the tree.

¹ The 14 visions, of varying lengths, are: 11.¹⁻⁷; 11.⁸⁻¹¹; 11.¹²⁻¹⁸; 11.¹⁹⁻²³; 11.²⁴⁻²⁵; 11.²⁶⁻²⁹; 11.³⁰; 11.³¹; 11.³²⁻³⁶; 12.¹⁻¹⁰; 12.¹¹⁻²³; 13.¹⁻¹⁴; 14.⁹⁻¹⁷; 14.¹⁸⁻³⁰

1 nephi 11–14— the visions of nephi (11.⁸⁻¹¹): questionnaire 3

⁸*The Spirit said unto me: “Look!”

And I looked and beheld a tree; and it was like unto the tree which my father had seen; and the beauty thereof was far beyond, yea, exceeding of all beauty; and the whiteness thereof did exceed the whiteness of the driven snow. ⁹After I had seen the tree, I said unto the Spirit: “I behold thou hast shown unto me the tree which is precious above all.”

¹⁰And he said unto me: “What desirest thou?”

¹¹And I said unto him: “To know the interpretation thereof”—for I spake unto him as a man speaketh; for I beheld that he was in the form of a man; yet nevertheless, I knew that it was the Spirit of the Lord; and he spake unto me as a man speaketh with another.

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Today’s reading is the third in this series, and explores the second of the fourteen visions.

1. Make a scripture list of the descriptors the Spirit uses in association with the tree *beyond, yea, exceeding of all beauty*” and “is precious *above all*”?
? Of what would you speak in such absolute superlatives?

2. Consider this statement uttered by Alma.

“For behold, I say unto you there be many things to come; and behold, there is one thing which is of more importance than they all— for behold, the time is not far distant that the Redeemer liveth and cometh among his people” (Alma 7.⁷).

- ? How does this relate to Nephi’s description of the tree: “the beauty thereof was far beyond, yes, exceeding of all beauty” and “the tree... is precious above all”?

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1 Nephi 11–14— the visions of Nephi (11.^{12–18}): questionnaire 4

¹²*He said unto me: “Look!”

And I looked as if to look upon him, and I saw him not; for he had gone from before my presence.

¹³*I looked and beheld the great city of Jerusalem, and also other cities. And I beheld the city of Nazareth; and in the city of Nazareth I beheld a virgin, and she was exceedingly fair and white. ¹⁴*I saw the heavens open; and an angel came down and stood before me; and he said unto me: “Nephi, what beholdest thou?”

¹⁵And I said unto him: “A virgin, most beautiful and fair above all other virgins.”

¹⁶And he said unto me: “Knowest thou the condescension of God?”

¹⁷And I said unto him: “I know that he loveth his children; nevertheless, I do not know the meaning of all things.”

¹⁸And he said unto me: “Behold, the virgin whom thou seest is the mother of the Son of God, after the manner of the flesh.”

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Today’s reading is the fourth in this series, and explores the third of the fourteen visions.

1. This vision was granted Nephi in response to his request to know the interpretation and meaning of the tree he and his father had seen—a tree, remember, that was in every way superior to any other tree.

? What, then, do we learn from this vision about the tree’s meaning?

? How does Jesus’ conception and birth relate to the tree?

2. The Spirit speaks of the “condescension of God.”

? What does the word, “condescend” mean to you?

? Who is the God doing the “condescending”... Yahweh, Elohim, or another?

? Why would Nephi answer the question concerning “the condescension of God,” with a confession that he knows God “loveth his children”?

? Why does Nephi associate the “condescension of God” with His love toward the human race?

? How does God’s love for us reflect a condescending attitude toward us on the part of Divinity?

Consider this insight concerning God

Who is like unto the LORD our God,

who dwelleth on high,

Who humbleth himself

to behold the things that are in heaven, and in the earth!” (Psalm 113.⁵⁻⁶)

¹ The 14 visions, of varying lengths, are: 11.¹⁻⁷; 11.⁸⁻¹¹; 11.¹²⁻¹⁸; 11.¹⁹⁻²³; 11.²⁴⁻²⁵; 11.²⁶⁻²⁹; 11.³⁰; 11.³¹; 11.³²⁻³⁶; 12.¹⁻¹⁰; 12.¹¹⁻²³; 13.¹⁻¹⁴.⁸; 14.⁹⁻¹⁷; 14.¹⁸⁻³⁰

- ? How does it relate to this idea of Divine condescension?
- ? We usually think of being condescending as a negative attribute. What does “the condescension of God” mean to you?
- ? What do you think of Jesus—who is God, Yahweh—when you think of him “coming down to be with” mankind?
- ? During his earthly ministry, how did his unquestionable personal “righteousness” and “holiness” impact the way he associated with an impure world and individuals dirtied by it?

1 Nephi 11–14— the visions of Nephi (11.^{19–23}): questionnaire 5

¹⁹*I beheld that she was carried away in the Spirit; and after she had been carried away in the Spirit for the space of a time the angel spake unto me, saying: “Look!”

²⁰And I looked and beheld the virgin again, bearing a child in her arms. ²¹And the angel said unto me: “Behold the Lamb of God, yea, even the Son of the Eternal Father! Knowest thou the meaning of the tree which thy father saw?”

²²And I answered him, saying: “Yea, it is the love of God, which sheddeth itself abroad in the hearts of the children of men; wherefore, it is the most desirable above all things.”

²³And he spake unto me, saying: “Yea, and the most joyous to the soul.”

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Today’s reading is the fifth in this series and explores the fourth of the fourteen visions.

1. This vision was granted Nephi in response to his request to know the interpretation and meaning of the tree he and his father had seen.
 - ? How does today’s reading shed light on the tree’s meaning?
 - ? How did Nephi make the leap from seeing Jesus’ birth to understanding the tree to be a symbol of God’s love?
 - ? How are they connected?
2. Nephi has not yet seen visions of Jesus’ life or suffering or death. Those will follow. All that he has seen is that he would enter a body and live among men.
 - ? How does this “incarnation” demonstrate “the love of God”?
 - ? What did Jesus leave behind to come here?
 - ? How do you feel when you consider the glory he left behind in order to live among men and witness all the perversion that is part of human existence?
3. Nephi feels God’s love to be “desirable above all things,” while the Spirit speaks of it as being “the most joyous to the soul.”
 - ? What evidence would one see in your daily life that you value God’s love above any other love?
4. We might understand “the love of God” as the love God possesses for us, the love we possess for God, or a love for others that is of a similar kind as God’s.
 - ? Is there another way to understand it? If so, what is it?
 - ? How are these three different ways of understanding the love of God reflected in your life?

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- ? Do you find Jesus and his Atonement to be “desirable above all things” and “most joyous to the soul”?
- ? What can you do to increase and deepen your appreciation for the Savior and his Atonement?

1 Nephi 11–14— the visions of Nephi (11.²⁴⁻²⁵): questionnaire 6

²⁴And after he had said these words, he said unto me: “Look!”

And I looked, and I beheld the Son of God going forth among the children of men; and I saw many fall down at his feet and worship him. ²⁵And *I beheld that the rod of iron, which my father had seen, was the word of God, which led to the fountain of living waters, or to the tree of life; which waters are a representation of the love of God; and I also beheld that the tree of life was a representation of the love of God.

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Today’s reading is the sixth in this series and explores the fifth of the fourteen visions.

1. This vision, like each vision, was granted Nephi in response to his request to know the interpretation and meaning of the tree he and his father had seen.
 - ? How does today’s reading shed light on the tree’s meaning?
2. Nephi has already come to understand that the tree in Lehi’s vision represents the love of God. We now learn what the rod of iron that led to the tree represents.
 - ? What is the rod?
 - ? How does God’s word lead to an understanding and experience of God’s love for us?
 - ? How and when has this happened in your life?
 - ? How does God’s word lead us to greater love for God?
 - ? How and when has this happened in your life?
 - ? How does God’s word lead us to possess godly love for others?
 - ? How and when has this happened in your life?
3. It is easy, as John testifies, to see God’s love manifest in Christ’s suffering and death.

“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3.¹⁴⁻¹⁶).

But Nephi does not mention, though he will later, the Savior’s suffering or death. He speaks, here, only of his “going forth among the children of men.”

- ? How is his descent to earth to live among men during an earthly mission in itself a manifestation of God’s love.

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? What does Jesus do during his ministry to reveal God's love?

1 Nephi 11–14— the visions of Nephi (11.^{26–29}): questionnaire 7

²⁶And the angel said unto me again: “Look and behold the condescension of God!”

²⁷And I looked and beheld the Redeemer of the world, of whom my father had spoken; and I also beheld the prophet who should prepare the way before him. And the Lamb of God went forth and was baptized of him; and after he was baptized, I beheld the heavens open, and the Holy Ghost come down out of heaven and abide upon him in the form of a dove. ²⁸And I beheld that he went forth ministering unto the people, in power and great glory; and the multitudes were gathered together to hear him; and I beheld that they cast him out from among them. ²⁹And I also beheld twelve others following him. And *they were carried away in the Spirit from before my face, and I saw them not.

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Today’s reading is the seventh in this series and explores the sixth of the fourteen visions.

1. This vision, like each vision, was granted Nephi in response to his request to know the interpretation and meaning of the tree he and his father had seen.
 - ? What does today’s reading contribute to your understanding concerning the meaning and significance of the tree?
2. In today’s reading Jesus is called by three names.
 - ? What are those three titles?
 - ? What does it mean that Jesus is “God”? “Redeemer”? “Lamb of God”?
 - ? What is the significance of each of them, not from a theological perspective, but from the perspective of how each title impacts your life and how you relate to the world around you?
3. At his baptism, the Holy Spirit “came down” and “abided” on Jesus “in the form of a dove”?
 - ? What is the significance and symbolism behind the dove?
 - ? Why do you answer as you do? What is the justification for your answer?
 - ? What role did the dove play in the story of Noah and the flood?
 - ? How is the Spirit’s descent upon Jesus a symbol that “the storm is over”?
 - ? What storms does he end?
 - ? What storm are in your life that you could ask Jesus to end?
 - ? What storms in the world around you?

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³⁰And *the angel spake unto me again, saying: “Look!”

And I looked, and I beheld the heavens open again, and I saw angels descending upon the children of men; and they did minister unto them.

³¹And he spake unto me again, saying: “Look!”

And I looked, and I beheld the Lamb of God going forth among the children of men. And I beheld multitudes of people who were sick, and who were afflicted with all manner of diseases, and with devils and unclean spirits; and the angel spake and showed all these things unto me. And they were healed by the power of the Lamb of God; and the devils and the unclean spirits were cast out.

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Today’s reading is the eighth in this series and explores the seventh and eighth of the fourteen visions.

1. This vision, like each vision, was granted Nephi in response to his request to know the interpretation and meaning of the tree he and his father had seen.
 - ? What does today’s reading contribute to your understanding concerning the meaning and significance of the tree?
2. In his seventh vision, Nephi saw that angels were particularly active during Jesus’ ministry.
 - ? What examples of this active angelic ministry do you see in the Gospel accounts of Jesus’ ministry?
3. In his eighth vision, Nephi reports that Jesus was surrounded by “multitudes” of people who were sick, diseased, and challenged by devils and unclean spirits.
 - ? Were there, do you feel, more such afflicted individuals during Jesus’ lifetime than today?

Nephi reports seeing Jesus heal these afflicted individuals. However, in so reporting, Nephi only specifically reports Jesus casting out “the devils and the unclean spirits.”

- ? What is the significance of this observation—this absence of reporting the healing of “the sick”?
- ? Why is Jesus’ ability to control and eliminate “devils” and “unclean spirits” so central to Jesus’ ministry and our faith in him?
- ? How do you apply this power Jesus possesses to your own life and world around you?
- ? How would you answer the previous question if we suggested that demons and unclean spirits can be understood as any overwhelming power of influence that torments the hearts and minds of people of all ages and circumstances?

¹ The 14 visions, of varying lengths, are: 11.¹⁻⁷; 11.⁸⁻¹¹; 11.¹²⁻¹⁸; 11.¹⁹⁻²³; 11.²⁴⁻²⁵; 11.²⁶⁻²⁹; 11.³⁰; 11.³¹; 11.³²⁻³⁶; 12.¹⁻¹⁰; 12.¹¹⁻²³; 13.¹⁻¹⁴; 14.¹⁻⁸; 14.⁹⁻¹⁷; 14.¹⁸⁻³⁰

1 Nephi 11–14— the visions of Nephi (11.^{32–33}): questionnaire 9

³²And *the angel spake unto me again, saying: “Look!”

And I looked and beheld the Lamb of God, that he was taken by the people; yea, the Son of the everlasting God was judged of the world; and I saw and bear record. ³³And I, Nephi, saw that he was lifted up upon the cross and slain for the sins of the world.

1 Nephi 11-14 represent a series of revelations Nephi received in response to his desire to understand the meaning and significance of his father’s dream, often referred to as “The Tree of Life Vision.”

Based on a literary pattern found within Nephi’s series of visions, we understand Nephi to have received 14 visions.¹ We explore this pattern as we work our way through the narrative. In order to have manageably short readings, we have divided the 14 visions into 33 separate daily readings.

The first eight visions focus on Christ and his earthly ministry. With the ninth vision Nephi saw Jesus’ death by crucifixion and that its “inspiration” came from a competing and opposing force, symbolized by the great and spacious building. Beginning with this ninth vision, Nephi’s visions explore the opposition the building represents to God and how he responds to that opposition.

Today’s reading is the ninth in this series and the first to two exploring the ninth of the fourteen visions.

1. This vision, like each vision, was granted Nephi in response to his request to know the interpretation and meaning of the tree he and his father had seen.
 - ? What does today’s reading contribute to your understanding concerning the meaning and significance of the tree?
2. Nephi calls Jesus “the Lamb of God.”
 - ? What does this mean to you?

Consider each of the following, what you learn and what does each brings to your mind.

The Lamb of God is...
The Lamb belonging to God
The Lamb from God
God’s sacrificial Lamb
The Lamb sacrificed by God
The Lamb that was God

3. Nephi says that Jesus was “judged of the world.”
 - ? By what specific standards would “the world” judge Jesus?
 - ? In what ways does Jesus indeed not “live up to,” or, more accurately, “live down to,” the world’s perverted standards?
4. Nephi’s phrase that Jesus was “slain for the sins of the world” is a common one.
 - ? What do you understand by the phrase?

The most common reading of the phrase is that because people, all people had sinned and would sin Jesus had to die to rectify the situation. It is read, then, as if to say, Jesus died for the benefit of the

¹ The 14 visions, of varying lengths, are: 11.¹⁻⁷; 11.⁸⁻¹¹; 11.¹²⁻¹⁸; 11.¹⁹⁻²³; 11.²⁴⁻²⁵; 11.²⁶⁻²⁹; 11.³⁰; 11.³¹; 11.³²⁻³⁶; 12.¹⁻¹⁰; 12.¹¹⁻²³; 13.¹⁻¹⁴; 14.⁹⁻¹⁷; 14.¹⁸⁻³⁰

world.

- ? How consistent is this with your own view?
- ? How would you feel and what would you think if we understood the phrase to signify that “a sinful world and sinful men killed Jesus”?

Or

“Herod, Pilate, and a Jewish leadership, being evil and steeped in sin (worldly), killed Jesus”

5. LDS theologians, lay and “trained” often put far more stock in Jesus’ experience in the Garden of Gethsemane than upon the cross. But nowhere in the Book of Mormon does it specifically mention Gethsemane or its ordeal. In mentioning Jesus ordeal of suffering the Book of Mormon always makes reference to “the cross” and his “crucifixion.”
 - ? How do you feel and what do you think about this observation?
 - ? What does it suggest about the visions and inspiration that Book of Mormon writers had of Jesus?
 - ? What does it suggest about Jesus’ crucifixion?
 - ? What does it suggest about how you should view the crucifixion?

1 Nephi 11–14— the visions of Nephi (11.^{34–36}): questionnaire 10

³⁴And after he was slain I saw the multitudes of the earth, that they were gathered together to fight against the apostles of the Lamb; for thus were the twelve called by the angel of the Lord.

³⁵And the multitude of the earth was gathered together; and I beheld that they were in a large and spacious building, like unto the building which my father saw. And the angel of the Lord spake unto me again, saying: “Behold the world and the wisdom thereof; yea, behold the house of Israel hath gathered together to fight against the twelve apostles of the Lamb.”

³⁶*I saw and bear record, that the great and spacious building was the pride of the world; and it fell, and the fall thereof was exceedingly great. And the angel of the Lord spake unto me again, saying: “Thus shall be the destruction of all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people, that shall fight against the twelve apostles of the Lamb.”

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The first eight visions focus on Christ and his earthly ministry. With the ninth vision Nephi saw Jesus’ death by crucifixion and that its “inspiration” came from a competing and opposing force, symbolized by the great and spacious building. Beginning with this ninth vision, Nephi’s visions explore the opposition the building represents to God and how he responds to that opposition.

Today’s reading is the tenth in this series and the second of two that explore the ninth of the fourteen visions. In addition, it is one of our “Just Scripture” passages.

1. This vision, like each vision, was granted Nephi in response to his request to know the interpretation and meaning of the tree he and his father had seen.
 - ? What does today’s reading contribute to your understanding concerning the meaning and significance of the tree?
2. This vision also reveals the character of the great and spacious building and its opposition to God.
 - ? What does today’s reading contribute to your understanding of the great and spacious building and its opposition to God?
3. The “great and spacious building” is described as:
 - The world
 - The wisdom of the world
 - The pride of the world
 - ? What is meant by “the world?”

In thinking about this, consider the following verses.

John 15.¹⁹

Romans 12.²

John 17.¹⁶

1 Corinthians 2.¹²

¹ The 14 visions, of varying lengths, are: 11.¹⁻⁷; 11.⁸⁻¹¹; 11.¹²⁻¹⁸; 11.¹⁹⁻²³; 11.²⁴⁻²⁵; 11.²⁶⁻²⁹; 11.³⁰; 11.³¹; 11.³²⁻³⁶; 12.¹⁻¹⁰; 12.¹¹⁻²³; 13.¹⁻¹⁴; 14.⁹⁻¹⁷; 14.¹⁸⁻³⁰

Luke 12.²⁹⁻³¹
Matthew 13.²²

Galatians 1.⁴
1 John 2.¹⁵⁻¹⁶

Often in scripture, “the world” does not refer to our global world, but to a sphere of ideas, attitudes, ideologies, value systems, affections, etc.

4. The building also represents “the wisdom of the world.”
? What is “wisdom”?

At its most basic, “wisdom” is “knowledge,” “skill,” or “know-how.” It is often focused on application of information or facts. Perhaps the following questions will help get to the nature of the world’s wisdom—for scripture affirms that it is indeed wise in its own way. It possesses certain “skills.” It knows how to get some things done.

- ? What is the nature of the world’s “wisdom”?
- ? In what ways is the world “wise”?
- ? What is “the world” good at?
- ? What are the “skills” at which the world excels?

5. Finally, the building is the “pride of the world.”
? What is meant by the “pride of the world”?

We could reframe the question like this: In what does the world take pride?

- ? How would you answer this question?

As you consider the question, “In what does the world take pride?” consider another passage that is part of Nephi’s angelic tutorial concerning his father’s dream, 1 Nephi 13.⁴⁻⁹

“And he said unto me: ‘These are the nations and kingdoms of the Gentiles.’ *I saw among the nations of the Gentiles the formation of a great church. And the angel said unto me: “Behold the formation of a church which is most abominable above all other churches, which slayeth the saints of God, yea, and tortureth them and bindeth them down, and yoketh them with a yoke of iron, and bringeth them down into captivity.”

*I beheld this great and abominable church; and I saw the devil that he was the founder of it. And I also saw gold, and silver, and silks, and scarlets, and fine-twined linen, and all manner of precious clothing; and I saw many harlots. And the angel spake unto me, saying: “Behold the gold, and the silver, and the silks, and the scarlets, and the fine-twined linen, and the precious clothing, and the harlots, are the desires of this great and abominable church. And also for the praise of the world do they destroy the saints of God, and bring them down into captivity.”

* I have removed the repetitive, “And it came to pass.”

Don’t think of the “great and abominable church” only in terms of official and organized “religion,” but in terms of institutions and their ideologies, value systems, desires, or the things in which they take pride and stand in opposition to the values and desires of God.

- ? How do the material things listed in these verses reflect the “wisdom of the world” (things that the world is skilled in obtaining) and the “pride of the world” (things that the world takes pride in)?
- ? How is such materialism as the great and spacious building represents in opposition to “the twelve apostles of the Lamb”?
- ? How does this passage apply to the establishment of a just society and how a just society looks in relation to materialism?
- ? How does it change your understanding of worldly “wisdom” and “pride” if we understand them to be focused on obtaining wealth, power, and prestige?

1 Nephi 11–14— the visions of Nephi (12.¹⁻³): questionnaire 11

¹*The angel said unto me: “Look, and behold thy seed, and also the seed of thy brethren.”

And I looked and beheld the land of promise; and I beheld multitudes of people, yea, even as it were in number as many as the sand of the sea. ²*I beheld multitudes gathered together to battle, one against the other; and I beheld wars, and rumors of wars, and great slaughters with the sword among my people. ³*I beheld many generations pass away, after the manner of wars and contentions in the land; and I beheld many cities, yea, even that I did not number them.

1 Nephi 11-14 represent a series of revelations Nephi received in response to his desire to understand the meaning and significance of his father’s dream, often referred to as “The Tree of Life Vision.”

Based on a literary pattern found within Nephi’s series of visions, we understand Nephi to have received 14 visions.¹ We explore this pattern as we work our way through the narrative. In order to have manageably short readings, we have divided the 14 visions into 33 separate daily readings.

The first eight visions focus on Christ and his earthly ministry. With the ninth vision Nephi saw Jesus’ death by crucifixion and that its “inspiration” came from a competing and opposing force, symbolized by the great and spacious building. Beginning with this ninth vision, Nephi’s visions explore the opposition the building represents to God and how he responds to that opposition.

Today’s reading is the eleventh in this series and the first of three that explore the tenth of the fourteen visions.

1. This vision, like each vision, was granted Nephi in response to his request to know the interpretation and meaning of the tree he and his father had seen.
 - ? What does today’s reading contribute to your understanding concerning the meaning and significance of the tree?
2. This vision also reveals the character of the great and spacious building and its opposition to God.
 - ? What does today’s reading contribute to your understanding of the great and spacious building and its opposition to God?
3. Nephi sees and speaks of “wars, and rumors of wars.” He repeats this phrase in 12.²¹ (twice); 14.¹⁵; and 14.¹⁶ as he sees other events during his vision.
 - ? What do you hear in this phrase?
 - ? How would you feel and what would you think if we understood this phrase to reflect “long, extended, habitual warfare”?
 - ? How do you feel about this phrase being used so often to reflect this planet’s history?
 - ? How accurately, do you think, does this phrase reflect human history?
 - ? How accurately does it reflect today’s world?
4. In a book that proclaims itself “Another Testament of Christ, we find roughly 15-20% of its pages devoted to “wars, and rumors of wars.”
 - ? How do you respond to this observation?
 - ? How does the report concerning the evils and preponderance of violence and warfare contribute to the Book’s testimony of Jesus Christ?

¹ The 14 visions, of varying lengths, are: 11.¹⁻⁷; 11.⁸⁻¹¹; 11.¹²⁻¹⁸; 11.¹⁹⁻²³; 11.²⁴⁻²⁵; 11.²⁶⁻²⁹; 11.³⁰; 11.³¹; 11.³²⁻³⁶; 12.¹⁻¹⁰; 12.¹¹⁻²³; 13.¹⁻¹⁴.⁸; 14.⁹⁻¹⁷; 14.¹⁸⁻³⁰

The Book of Mormon editor offers the following observations concerning “wars, and rumors of wars.”

“And thus ended the thirty and first year of the reign of the judges over the people of Nephi; and thus they had had wars, and bloodsheds, and famine, and affliction, for the space of many years. And there had been murders, and contentions, and dissensions, and all manner of iniquity among the people of Nephi; nevertheless for the righteous' sake, yea, because of the prayers of the righteous, they were spared. But behold, because of the exceedingly great length of the war between the Nephites and the Lamanites many had become hardened, because of the exceedingly great length of the war; and many were softened because of their afflictions, insomuch that they did humble themselves before God, even in the depth of humility” (Alma 62.³⁹⁻⁴¹).

- ? How do wars and rumors of wars serve to distinguish the spiritually “hardened” from the “softened”?
- ? What do you see in your society that confirms the observation of these verses?
- ? What forms of hardness do you see in society today that might be a result of 20 years of American wars in the Middle East?

1 Nephi 11–14— the visions of Nephi (12.⁴⁻⁵): questionnaire 12

⁴*I saw a mist of darkness on the face of the land of promise; and I saw lightnings, and I heard thunderings, and earthquakes, and all manner of tumultuous noises; and I saw the earth and the rocks, that they rent; and I saw mountains tumbling into pieces; and I saw the plains of the earth, that they were broken up; and I saw many cities that they were sunk; and I saw many that they were burned with fire; and I saw many that did tumble to the earth, because of the quaking thereof. ⁵And *after I saw these things, I saw the vapor of darkness, that it passed from off the face of the earth; and behold, I saw multitudes who had not fallen because of the great and terrible judgments of the Lord.

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The first eight visions focus on Christ and his earthly ministry. With the ninth vision Nephi saw Jesus' death by crucifixion and that its "inspiration" came from a competing and opposing force, symbolized by the great and spacious building. Beginning with this ninth vision, Nephi's visions explore the opposition the building represents to God and how he responds to that opposition.

Today's reading is the twelfth in this series and is the second of three that explore the tenth of the fourteen visions.

1. This vision, like each vision, was granted Nephi in response to his request to know the interpretation and meaning of the tree he and his father had seen.
 - ? What does today's reading contribute to your understanding concerning the meaning and significance of the tree?
2. This vision also reveals the character of the great and spacious building and its opposition to God.
 - ? What does today's reading contribute to your understanding of the great and spacious building and its opposition to God?
3. In today's reading Nephi mentions a "mist of darkness" at the beginning and a "vapor of darkness" toward the end. The "mist of darkness" that Nephi sees in this vision is an actual darkness that descended upon the land as a consequence of Jesus' death. However, in his father's dream, the "mist of darkness" is a representation of temptation.
 - ? How is the literal darkness that accompanied the natural disasters at the death of Jesus related to the mists of darkness that was part of Lehi's tree of life vision?
 - ? How did the temptations of the devil, represented in the dream by the mist of darkness, contribute to the destruction of Nephite society?
 - ? How did Jesus' resurrection serve to make both the physical and the spiritual mist to "pass from off the face of the earth"?
 - ? From your readings in 3 and 4 Nephi, how would you describe the power of temptation after Jesus' resurrection and appearance in America and for the next 200 years?
 - ? What is the meaning of this loss of temptation's power with Jesus' presence for your own life?

¹ The 14 visions, of varying lengths, are: 11.¹⁻⁷; 11.⁸⁻¹¹; 11.¹²⁻¹⁸; 11.¹⁹⁻²³; 11.²⁴⁻²⁵; 11.²⁶⁻²⁹; 11.³⁰; 11.³¹; 11.³²⁻³⁶; 12.¹⁻¹⁰; 12.¹¹⁻²³; 13.¹⁻¹⁴; 14.⁹⁻¹⁷; 14.¹⁸⁻³⁰

4. In the previous reading, we saw that Nephite society was characterized by “wars and rumors of war.”
 - ? How are the wars, even a state of constant warfare, related to the mist of darkness?
 - ? How did Nephite wars and the state of continual war among the Nephites contribute to the collapse of Nephite society?
 - ? How might wars and the state of continual war contribute to societal collapse in today’s world?
 - ? How does partaking of the tree, or the love of God, safeguard a society from falling under the spell of “mists of darkness” and ending in collapse?

⁶And I saw the heavens open, and the Lamb of God descending out of heaven; and he came down and showed himself unto them. ⁷And I also saw and bear record that the Holy Ghost fell upon twelve others; and they were ordained of God, and chosen. ⁸And the angel spake unto me, saying: “Behold the twelve disciples of the Lamb, who are chosen to minister unto thy seed.”

⁹And he said unto me: “Thou rememberest the twelve apostles of the Lamb? Behold they are they who shall judge the twelve tribes of Israel; wherefore, the twelve ministers of thy seed shall be judged of them; for ye are of the house of Israel. ¹⁰And these twelve ministers whom thou beholdest shall judge thy seed. And, behold, they are righteous forever; for because of their faith in the Lamb of God their garments are made white in his blood.”

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The first eight visions focus on Christ and his earthly ministry. With the ninth vision Nephi saw Jesus’ death by crucifixion and that its “inspiration” came from a competing and opposing force, symbolized by the great and spacious building. Beginning with this ninth vision, Nephi’s visions explore the opposition the building represents to God and how he responds to that opposition.

Today’s reading is the thirteenth in this series and is the last of three that explore the tenth of the fourteen visions.

1. This vision, like each vision, was granted Nephi in response to his request to know the interpretation and meaning of the tree he and his father had seen.
 - ? What does today’s reading contribute to your understanding concerning the meaning and significance of the tree?
2. This vision also reveals the character of the great and spacious building and its opposition to God.
 - ? What does today’s reading contribute to your understanding of the great and spacious building and its opposition to God?
3. Upon visiting America, Jesus called 12 apostles.
 - ? How is Jesus’ calling of twelve apostles a response to the great and spacious building and the temptations that it represents?
4. Nephi saw that “because of [the apostles’] faith in the Lamb of God their garments are made white in his blood.” Compare the following passages.

“I say unto you, ye will know at that day that ye cannot be saved; for there can no man be saved except *his garments be washed white*; yea, his garments must be purified until they are cleansed from all stain, *through the blood of him* of whom it has been spoken by our fathers, who should come to redeem his people from their sins” (Al. 5.²¹).

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“And then cometh the New Jerusalem; and blessed are they who dwell therein, for it is they whose garments are white *through the blood of the Lamb*; and they are they who are numbered among the remnant of the seed of Joseph, who were of the house of Israel” (Eth. 13.¹⁰).

“Therefore they were called after his holy order, and were sanctified, and *their garments were washed white through the blood of the Lamb*” (Al. 13.¹¹).

- ? What do you see when you contemplate this imagery of garments being made” white or “washed” white in blood?
- ? How is it possible that a garment washed with or in blood should become white? Shouldn't it rather become red?
- ? What do you make of this seemingly incongruous imagery?
- ? What would you think and how would you feel if we suggested that the fact that this imagery really doesn't make sense is exactly the point—that there is a sense in which the Atonement doesn't really make sense, is unexplainable, and beyond rational explanation?
- ? What scripture passages come to your mind when you consider the “mystery of Atonement?”
- ? What do you think and feel when you read the following passage that expresses Ammon's wonder at the unexplainable nature of Atonement?

“Who could have supposed that our God would have been so merciful as to have snatched us from our awful, sinful, and polluted state? Behold, we went forth even in wrath, with mighty threatenings to destroy his church. Oh then, why did he not consign us to an awful destruction, yea, why did he not let the sword of his justice fall upon us, and doom us to eternal despair? Oh, my soul, almost as it were, fleeth at the thought. Behold, he did not exercise his justice upon us, but in his great mercy hath brought us over that everlasting gulf of death and misery, even to the salvation of our souls” (Al. 26.¹⁷⁻²⁰).

- ? How do you explain the Atonement of Jesus Christ as you have experienced it?

1 Nephi 11–14— the visions of Nephi (12.^{11–15}): questionnaire 14

¹¹And the angel said unto me: “Look!”

And I looked, and beheld three generations pass away in righteousness; and their garments were white even like unto the Lamb of God. And the angel said unto me: “These are made white in the blood of the Lamb, because of their faith in him.”

¹²And I, Nephi, also saw many of the fourth generation who passed away in righteousness. ¹³I saw the multitudes of the earth gathered together. ¹⁴And the angel said unto me: “Behold thy seed, and also the seed of thy brethren.”

¹⁵And *I looked and beheld the people of my seed gathered together in multitudes against the seed of my brethren; and they were gathered together to battle.

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Today’s reading is the fourteenth in this series and is the first of three that explore the eleventh of the fourteen visions.

1. This vision, like each vision, was granted Nephi in response to his request to know the interpretation and meaning of the tree he and his father had seen.
 - ? What does today’s reading contribute to your understanding concerning the meaning and significance of the tree?
2. This vision also reveals the character of the great and spacious building and its opposition to God.
 - ? What does today’s reading contribute to your understanding of the great and spacious building and its opposition to God?
3. In the previous reading, Nephi saw that “because of [the apostles’] faith in the Lamb of God their garments are made white in his blood.” In today’s reading, Nephi saw “three generations” whose “garments were white.” “These,” Nephi was informed, were “made white in the blood of the Lamb.” Compare the following passages.

“I say unto you, ye will know at that day that ye cannot be saved; for there can no man be saved except his *garments are washed white*; yea, his garments must be purified until they are cleansed from all stain, *through the blood of him of whom it has been spoken by our fathers*, who should come to redeem his people from their sins” (Alma 5.²¹).

“And then cometh the New Jerusalem; and blessed are they who dwell therein, for it is they whose *garments are white through the blood of the Lamb*; and they are they who are

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numbered among the remnant of the seed of Joseph, who were of the house of Israel” (Ether 13.¹⁰).

“Therefore they were called after this holy order, and were sanctified, and their *garments were washed white through the blood of the Lamb*” (Alma 13.¹¹).

- ? What do you see when you contemplate this imagery of garments being “made” white or “washed” white in blood?
- ? How is it possible that a garment washed with or in blood should become white? Shouldn’t it rather be red?
- ? What do you make of this seemingly incongruous imagery?
- ? What would you think and how would you feel if we suggested that the fact that this imagery really doesn’t make sense is exactly the point—that, there is a sense in which the Atonement doesn’t really make sense, is unexplainable, and beyond rational explanation?
- ? What scripture passages come to your mind when you consider the “mystery” of Atonement?
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- ? How do you explain the Atonement of Jesus Christ as you have experienced it?

1 Nephi 11–14— the visions of Nephi (12.^{16–18}): questionnaire 15

¹⁶And the angel spake unto me, saying: “Behold the fountain of filthy water which thy father saw; yea, even the river of which he spake; and the depths thereof are the depths of hell. ¹⁷And the mists of darkness are the temptations of the devil, which blindeth the eyes, and hardeneth the hearts of the children of men, and leadeth them away into broad roads, that they perish and are lost. ¹⁸And the large and spacious building, which thy father saw, is vain imaginations and the pride of the children of men. And a great and a terrible gulf divideth them; yea, even the word of the justice of the Eternal God, and the Messiah who is the Lamb of God, of whom the Holy Ghost beareth record, from the beginning of the world until this time, and from this time henceforth and forever.”

1 Nephi 11-14 represent a series of revelations Nephi received in response to his desire to understand the meaning and significance of his father’s dream, often referred to as “The Tree of Life Vision.”

Based on a literary pattern found within Nephi’s series of visions, we understand Nephi to have received 14 visions.* We explore this pattern as we work our way through the narrative. In order to have manageably short readings, we have divided the 14 visions into 33 separate daily readings.

The first eight visions focus on Christ and his earthly ministry. With the ninth vision Nephi saw Jesus’ death by crucifixion and that its “inspiration” came from a competing and opposing force, symbolized by the great and spacious building. Beginning with this ninth vision, Nephi’s visions explore the opposition the building represents to God and how he responds to that opposition.

Today’s reading is the fifteenth in this series and is the second of three that explore the eleventh of the fourteen visions.

1. This vision, like each vision, was granted Nephi in response to his request to know the interpretation and meaning of the tree he and his father had seen.
 - ? What does today’s reading contribute to your understanding concerning the meaning and significance of the tree?
2. This vision also reveals the character of the great and spacious building, its opposition to God, and/or God’s response to its opposition.
 - ? What does today’s reading contribute to your understanding of the great and spacious building, its opposition to God, and/or God’s response to its opposition?
3. In today’s reading, the angel quickly interprets three elements of the dream.
 - ? What three elements are interpreted and what are their meanings?
4. Nephi sees that “Temptations” “blindeth the eyes” and “hardeneth... hearts.”
 - ? How do temptations accomplish these things?
5. We have already learned that the “great and spacious building” represents the “pride of the world,” or those things, people, places, and institutions in which the world takes pride. In today’s reading the angel adds an interpretation to the building’s meaning.
 - ? What is that addition?
 - ? What do you think of when you think of “imagination”?
 - ? What do you think of when you think of something being “vain”?
 - ? What do you think of when you think of “vain imaginations”?

- ? What sorts of imagining is “vain”?
 - ? How is “imagining” that the things in which the world takes pride—wealth, power, and prestige—can bring true security and joy?
6. Nephi learns that “the word of justice” “divideth them.”
- ? Who or what is the “them”?
 - ? How would you respond to a suggestion that the “word of justice” divides those in the great and spacious building from the tree of life?
 - ? What would be the meaning of the “word of justice” dividing those who partake of the tree of life from the great and spacious building?
 - ? How does coming to Christ and learning from him act as an antidote to the allure of the great and spacious building?
 - ? What is the nature of “justice” here and elsewhere in the Book of Mormon?
 - ? Which is the stronger Book of Mormon emphasis of “justice:” “fairness/ equity” or “punishment”? Why do you answer as you do?

1 Nephi 11–14— the visions of Nephi (12.^{19–23}): questionnaire 16

¹⁹And while the angel spake these words, I beheld and saw that the seed of my brethren did contend against my seed, according to the word of the angel; and because of the pride of my seed, and the temptations of the devil, I beheld that the seed of my brethren did overpower the people of my seed. ²⁰And *I beheld, and saw the people of the seed of my brethren that they had overcome my seed; and they went forth in multitudes upon the face of the land. ²¹And I saw them gathered together in multitudes; and I saw wars and rumors of wars among them; and in wars and rumors of wars I saw many generations pass away. ²²And the angel said unto me: “Behold these shall dwindle in unbelief.” ²³And *I beheld, after they had dwindled in unbelief they became a dark, and loathsome, and a filthy people, full of idleness and all manner of abominations.

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Based on a literary pattern found within Nephi’s series of visions, we understand Nephi to have received 14 visions.* We explore this pattern as we work our way through the narrative. In order to have manageably short readings, we have divided the 14 visions into 33 separate daily readings.

The first eight visions focus on Christ and his earthly ministry. With the ninth vision Nephi saw Jesus’ death by crucifixion and that its “inspiration” came from a competing and opposing force, symbolized by the great and spacious building. Beginning with this ninth vision, Nephi’s visions explore the opposition the building represents to God and how he responds to that opposition.

Today’s reading is the sixteenth in this series and is the last of three that explore the eleventh of the fourteen visions.

1. This vision, like each vision, was granted Nephi in response to his request to know the interpretation and meaning of the tree he and his father had seen.
 - ? What does today’s reading contribute to your understanding concerning the meaning and significance of the tree?
2. This vision also reveals the character of the great and spacious building, its opposition to God, and/or God’s response to its opposition.
 - ? What does today’s reading contribute to your understanding of the great and spacious building, its opposition to God, and/or God’s response to its opposition?
3. Nephi sees that “the pride of my seed, and the temptations of the devil” allowed “the seed of my brethren” to “overpower the people of my seed.”
 - ? How does “pride” or the things in which this world takes pride, i.e. wealth, power, and prestige, cause a weakening of a society so infected and allow other societies to “overpower” it?
 - ? What is it about a focus on wealth, power, and prestige that it weakens society?
 - ? What is it about wealth, power, and prestige that makes it such an effective tool in Satan’s toolbox of temptations?
4. Nephi sees that his brothers’ seed experienced “wars and rumors of wars” among themselves and that these “wars and rumors of wars lasted “many generations.”
 - ? How and why are wars and rumors of wars such a natural element and characteristic of the great and spacious building, the pride of the world, or the pursuit of wealth, power, and prestige?

5. As Nephi sees his brothers' seed descend into societal chaos, he says that they "became a dark, and loathsome, and a filthy people, full of idleness and all manner of abominations." Later in the Book of Mormon, Enos would speak of the Lamanites as "wild, and ferocious, and a blood-thirsty people, full of idolatry and filthiness; feeding upon beasts of prey; dwelling in tents, and wandering about in the wilderness with a short skin girdle about their loins and their heads shaven; and their skill was in the bow, and in the cimeter, and the ax. And many of them did eat nothing save it was raw meat..." (En. 1.²⁰).
- ? Is there something inherently wrong with the Lamanites' preference for less temporary housing than that of the Nephites, or their preference for less clothing than the Nephites, or their preference for hunting over agriculture, or their preference for meat rather than the more agricultural diet of the Nephites, or their preference for different hair styles than the Nephites?
- ? What role might cultural bias and racism have played in both Nephi's view of future Lamanites and Enos' estimation of Lamanites in his own day?
- ? How does the cultural bias and racism displayed toward Lamanites in the Book of Mormon differ from that of early Americans' bias and racism toward Native Americans?
- ? What role does cultural bias and racism play in the ideologies of the great and spacious building?
- ? How do we avoid the same cultural bias and racism today?

1 Nephi 11–14— the visions of Nephi (13.¹⁻⁶): questionnaire 17

¹*The angel spake unto me, saying: “Look!”

And I looked and beheld many nations and kingdoms. ²And the angel said unto me: “What beholdest thou?”

And I said: “I behold many nations and kingdoms.”

³And he said unto me: “These are the nations and kingdoms of the Gentiles.”

⁴And *I saw among the nations of the Gentiles the formation of a great church. ⁵And the angel said unto me: “Behold the formation of a church which is most abominable above all other churches, which slayeth the saints of God, yea, and tortureth them and bindeth them down, and yoketh them with a yoke of iron, and bringeth them down into captivity.”

⁶And *I beheld this great and abominable church; and I saw the devil that he was the founder of it.

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The first eight visions focus on Christ and his earthly ministry. With the ninth vision Nephi saw Jesus’ death by crucifixion and that its “inspiration” came from a competing and opposing force, symbolized by the great and spacious building. Beginning with this ninth vision, Nephi’s visions explore the opposition the building represents to God and how he responds to that opposition.

Today’s reading is the seventeenth in this series and is the first of thirteen that explore the twelfth (and longest) of the fourteen visions.

1. This vision, like each vision, was granted Nephi in response to his request to know the interpretation and meaning of the tree he and his father had seen.
 - ? What does today’s reading contribute to your understanding concerning the meaning and significance of the tree?
2. This vision also reveals the character of the great and spacious building, its opposition to God, and/or God’s response to its opposition.
 - ? What does today’s reading contribute to your understanding of the great and spacious building, its opposition to God, and/or God’s response to its opposition?
3. Today’s reading speaks of “the nations and kingdoms of the Gentiles.”
 - ? What and who is meant by “gentile” “nations and kingdoms”?
4. Nephi’s sees “the formation of a great church... which is most abominable above all other churches.”
 - ? What should we understand this “great church” to be?
 - ? In your view, must this “great church” be a traditional “religious” institution?
 - ? If you can have the ‘great church’ be something other than a traditional “religious” institution, what types of institutions become something akin to “religion” in the minds of those who appreciate them?
 - ? How do institutions, both those traditionally “religious” and those traditionally “secular” act in ways that “slayeth the saints of God... tortureth them and bindeth them down... yoketh them with a yoke of iron, and bringeth them down into captivity?”

And I also saw gold, and silver, and silks, and scarlets, and fine-twined linen, and all manner of precious clothing; and I saw many harlots. And the angel spake unto me, saying: Behold the gold, and the silver, and the silks, and the scarlets, and the fine-twined linen, and the precious clothing, and the harlots, are the desires of this great and abominable church. ⁹And also for the praise of the world do they destroy the saints of God, and bring them down into captivity.”

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Based on a literary pattern found within Nephi’s series of visions, we understand Nephi to have received 14 visions.* We explore this pattern as we work our way through the narrative. In order to have manageably short readings, we have divided the 14 visions into 33 separate daily readings.

The first eight visions focus on Christ and his earthly ministry. With the ninth vision Nephi saw Jesus’ death by crucifixion and that its “inspiration” came from a competing and opposing force, symbolized by the great and spacious building. Beginning with this ninth vision, Nephi’s visions explore the opposition the building represents to God and how he responds to that opposition.

Today’s reading is the eighteenth in this series and is the second of thirteen that explore the twelfth (and longest) of the fourteen visions.

1. This vision, like each vision, was granted Nephi in response to his request to know the interpretation and meaning of the tree he and his father had seen.
 - ? What does today’s reading contribute to your understanding concerning the meaning and significance of the tree?
2. This vision also reveals the character of the great and spacious building, its opposition to God, and/or God’s response to its opposition.
 - ? What does today’s reading contribute to your understanding of the great and spacious building, its opposition to God, and/or God’s response to its opposition?
3. Earlier in this series, we identified the great and spacious building said to be “the pride of this world,” as those things in which the world takes pride: wealth, power, and prestige.
 - ? How does the “great and abominable church” demonstrate that the accumulation of wealth and prestige and the exercise of power is its highest priority?
 - ? What do you think and feel when we identify the “great and abominable church” with the “great and spacious building”?
 - ? How could we justify seeing the “great and abominable church” as representative of companies, banks, and other financial institutions, led by their executives?

1 Nephi 11–14— the visions of Nephi (13.^{10–14}): questionnaire 19

¹⁰And I looked and beheld many waters; and they divided the Gentiles from the seed of my brethren.

¹¹And *the angel said unto me: “Behold the wrath of God is upon the seed of thy brethren.”

¹²And I looked and beheld a man among the Gentiles, who was separated from the seed of my brethren by the many waters; and I beheld the Spirit of God, that it came down and wrought upon the man; and he went forth upon the many waters, even unto the seed of my brethren, who were in the promised land. ¹³And *I beheld the Spirit of God, that it wrought upon other Gentiles; and they went forth out of captivity, upon the many waters. ¹⁴And *I beheld many multitudes of the Gentiles upon the land of promise; and I beheld the wrath of God, that it was upon the seed of my brethren; and they were scattered before the Gentiles and were smitten.

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The first eight visions focus on Christ and his earthly ministry. With the ninth vision Nephi saw Jesus’ death by crucifixion and that its “inspiration” came from a competing and opposing force, symbolized by the great and spacious building. Beginning with this ninth vision, Nephi’s visions explore the opposition the building represents to God and how he responds to that opposition.

Today’s reading is the nineteenth in this series and is the third of thirteen that explore the twelfth (and longest) of the fourteen visions.

1. This vision, like each vision, was granted Nephi in response to his request to know the interpretation and meaning of the tree he and his father had seen.
 - ? What does today’s reading contribute to your understanding concerning the meaning and significance of the tree?
2. This vision also reveals the character of the great and spacious building, its opposition to God, and/or God’s response to its opposition.
 - ? What does today’s reading contribute to your understanding of the great and spacious building, its opposition to God, and/or God’s response to its opposition?
3. Today’s reading comes on the heels of nine verses focused on the “great and abominable church” with its priorities of wealth, power, and prestige.
 - ? How do the events predicted in today’s reading—the discovery and dominance of America—relate to the religious and secular European institutions’ search for wealth, power, and prestige?
4. According to today’s reading European explorers who discovered the Americas “went forth out of captivity.”
 - ? What was the nature of that “captivity”?
 - ? How would you respond to the suggestion that the captivity from which they went was, in large part, the ignorance of the middle ages—they went out in spite of the ignorant belief that the world was flat, for example.
 - ? What role did the Holy Spirit play in bringing society out of such ignorance?

- ? What do you do with the fact that while the Holy Spirit helped lead explorers out of ignorance, those same explorers murdered, plundered, raped, tortured, etc.?
 - ? What other examples can you point to in which individuals and groups that were guilty of wickedness nonetheless brought about conditions that could later be used by God to accomplish some end?
 - ? Does the fact that some later good came of an earlier evil, exempt those who did the evil from having the evil remembered and suffering the consequences of their evil?
 - ? How do you feel about, explain, and balance these contradictions?
5. The fact that God might predict certain actions is not indicative of his acceptance of those actions or suggest that he condones such actions—God predicted that Assyrian would destroy Israel but then, in the next breath, threatened the Assyrians with destruction because of the violence they perpetrated against Israel.
- ? Do we have an example here of God describing the future while not prescribing the actions described? Why do you answer as you do?
 - ? What is the difference between “prescribing” and “describing”?
 - ? Does “describing” suggest or imply condoning? Why do you answer as you do?

1 Nephi 11–14— the visions of Nephi (13.^{15–19}): questionnaire 20

¹⁵And I beheld the Spirit of the Lord, that it was upon the Gentiles, and they did prosper and obtain the land for their inheritance; and I beheld that they were white, and exceedingly fair and beautiful, like unto my people before they were slain. ¹⁶And *I, Nephi, beheld that the Gentiles who had gone forth out of captivity did humble themselves before the Lord; and the power of the Lord was with them. ¹⁷And I beheld that their mother Gentiles were gathered together upon the waters, and upon the land also, to battle against them. ¹⁸And I beheld that the power of God was with them, and also that the wrath of God was upon all those that were gathered together against them to battle. ¹⁹And I, Nephi, beheld that the Gentiles that had gone out of captivity were delivered by the power of God out of the hands of all other nations.

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Today's reading is the twentieth in this series and is the fourth of thirteen that explore the twelfth (and longest) of the fourteen visions.

1. This vision, like each vision, was granted Nephi in response to his request to know the interpretation and meaning of the tree he and his father had seen.
 - ? What does today's reading contribute to your understanding concerning the meaning and significance of the tree?
2. This vision also reveals the character of the great and spacious building, its opposition to God, and/or God's response to its opposition.
 - ? What does today's reading contribute to your understanding of the great and spacious building, its opposition to God, and/or God's response to its opposition?
3. You may very well respond to this passage differently than I. It causes me all sorts of problems and raises all kinds of questions. Here are a few. Do with them what you will.
 - ? There is the issue of its apparent racism. Do you find racism in this passage; in Nephi's description of Europeans as "white, and exceedingly fair and beautiful, like unto my people before they were slain"? Why do you answer as you do? (We will leave aside the fact that the Nephites, being Jewish, never were "white.")
 - ? This issue of racism raises questions about the translation of the Book of Mormon. How much of the apparent acceptance of racism is the result of ancient acceptance of racism and now much is the result of American acceptance of racism (and the "patriotic" duty to accept it) in which Joseph Smith was born and bred?

If we accept the possibility of racism in this passage, we might consider the following passage and conclude that the racism was ancient, racism being nothing unique to America. In this passage, Enos

complains, justifiably, of the Lamanites hostility toward his people, the Nephites. But he seems to go beyond this into racism or, at least, unjustified cultural bias. He describes Lamanites as

“feeding upon beasts of prey; dwelling in tents, and wandering about in the wilderness with a short skin girdle about their loins and their heads shaven; and their skill was in the bow, and in the cimeter, and the ax. And many of them did eat nothing save it was raw meat...” (Enos 1.²⁰).

- ? Do you agree that this passage might reveal an ancient racism and cultural bias? Why do you answer as you do?
- ? How would you feel about finding racism in Nephi?
- ? Could you still accept that God could work through him? Why or why not?
- ? To what examples can you point as illustrative of our modern racism and cultural biases similar to those in this passage?

If we accept the possibility of racism in this passage, we might ask whether it is an intrusion of Joseph Smith into the text.

- ? How much influence did Joseph and his personal and cultural beliefs have on the text, do you think? None? Little? Frequent? Why do you answer as you do?

4. Nephi says that “the Gentiles who had gone forth out of captivity did humble themselves before the Lord; and the power of the Lord was with them.”

- ? Do you agree with this characterization? Why or why not?

As early as 1820, the Lord, according to Joseph Smith, characterized the state of “gentile” “Christian” religion in America as follows:

“they were all wrong; and the Personage who addressed me said that all their creeds were an abomination in his sight; that those professors were all corrupt; that: “they draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me, they teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof” (JSH 1.¹⁹).

We sometimes forget just how soon after the mythologized American Revolution the Lord made this observation.

- ? How do you deal with the, if not contradiction, the tension between the Book of Mormon perspective and that of the Lord in 1820?
- ? How “humble” and Spirit guided do the “gentiles” in Joseph Smith’s time sound?
- ? Could the “gentiles” really have fallen so far so fast as would be indicated if both assessments—that of the Book of Mormon and that of the Lord—as taken as accurate and at face value? Why do you answer as you do?

1 Nephi 11–14— the visions of Nephi (13.^{20–23}): questionnaire 21

²⁰And *I, Nephi, beheld that they did prosper in the land; and I beheld a book, and it was carried forth among them. ²¹And the angel said unto me: “Knowest thou the meaning of the book?”

²²And I said unto him: “I know not.”

²³And he said: “Behold it proceedeth out of the mouth of a Jew.”

And I, Nephi, beheld it; and he said unto me: “The book that thou beholdest is a record of the Jews, which contains the covenants of the Lord, which he hath made unto the house of Israel; and it also containeth many of the prophecies of the holy prophets; and it is a record like unto the engravings which are upon the plates of brass, save there are not so many; nevertheless, they contain the covenants of the Lord, which he hath made unto the house of Israel; wherefore, they are of great worth unto the Gentiles.”

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Today’s reading is the twenty-first in this series and is the fifth of thirteen that explore the twelfth (and longest) of the fourteen visions.

1. This vision, like each vision, was granted Nephi in response to his request to know the interpretation and meaning of the tree he and his father had seen.
 - ? What does today’s reading contribute to your understanding concerning the meaning and significance of the tree?
2. This vision also reveals the character of the great and spacious building, its opposition to God, and/or God’s response to its opposition.
 - ? What does today’s reading contribute to your understanding of the great and spacious building, its opposition to God, and/or God’s response to its opposition?
3. Nephi says that the gentiles “did prosper in the land.”
 - ? What do you understand to be the nature of their prosperity?
 - ? How would you react to the suggestion that a close reading of the Book of Mormon leads to the conclusion that prosperity in the Book of Mormon (and the Bible, too, for that matter) has less to do with economic success and more with political, social, and military dominance?
 - ? How is “gentile” dominance over “Lamanites” manifested in American history?
 - ? How do you feel about this dominance? How has it been achieved? What have been the consequences to native Americans?
4. Nephi saw the Bible arriving in America along with the gentiles themselves and is told by the angle that it is “of great worth unto the Gentiles.”
 - ? What truths does Nephi see that the Bible contains?

- ? What truths does God provide in the Bible that can counteract the influence of the great and spacious building, the “pride of the world,” or the too high esteem given to the possession of wealth, power, and prestige that the building represents?
- ? What about the Bible is “of great worth” to you?

1 Nephi 11–14— the visions of Nephi (13.^{24–25}): questionnaire 22

²⁴And the angel of the Lord said unto me: “Thou hast beheld that the book proceeded forth from the mouth of a Jew; and when it proceeded forth from the mouth of a Jew it contained the fulness of the gospel of the Lord, of whom the twelve apostles bear record; and they bear record according to the truth which is in the Lamb of God. ²⁵Wherefore, these things go forth from the Jews in purity unto the Gentiles, according to the truth which is in God.

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The first eight visions focus on Christ and his earthly ministry. With the ninth vision Nephi saw Jesus’ death by crucifixion and that its “inspiration” came from a competing and opposing force, symbolized by the great and spacious building. Beginning with this ninth vision, Nephi’s visions explore the opposition the building represents to God and how he responds to that opposition.

Today’s reading is the twenty-second in this series and is the sixth of thirteen that explore the twelfth (and longest) of the fourteen visions.

1. This vision, like each vision, was granted Nephi in response to his request to know the interpretation and meaning of the tree he and his father had seen.
 - ? What does today’s reading contribute to your understanding concerning the meaning and significance of the tree?
2. This vision also reveals the character of the great and spacious building, its opposition to God, and/or God’s response to its opposition.
 - ? What does today’s reading contribute to your understanding of the great and spacious building, its opposition to God, and/or God’s response to its opposition?
3. In this portion of the 12th vision, Nephi sees a book
 - ? What is this book?
 - ? What is found in the book?
4. Nephi sees that the book contains “the truth which is in the Lamb of God” and “the truth which is in God.”
 - ? What is the significance of saying that the book contains “the truth” as it is “*in the Lamb of God*” and as it is “*in God*” rather than simply saying it contains “the truth”?
5. Nephi says that the book was “pure” when it left Jewish hands.
 - ? What does this mean to you?
 - ? What are your feelings about the Bible? Why do you answer as you do?
 - ? What half dozen Bible passages have been most significant in your search for understanding and truth? What is it about these passages that have made them so memorable and important? What truths did they communicate to you?

²⁶“And after they go forth by the hand of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, from the Jews unto the Gentiles, thou seest the formation of that great and abominable church, which is most abominable above all other churches; for behold, they have taken away from the gospel of the Lamb many parts which are plain and most precious; and also many covenants of the Lord have they taken away. ²⁷And all this have they done that they might pervert the right ways of the Lord, that they might blind the eyes and harden the hearts of the children of men. ²⁸Wherefore, thou seest that after the book hath gone forth through the hands of the great and abominable church, that there are many plain and precious things taken away from the book, which is the book of the Lamb of God.

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The first eight visions focus on Christ and his earthly ministry. With the ninth vision Nephi saw Jesus’ death by crucifixion and that its “inspiration” came from a competing and opposing force, symbolized by the great and spacious building. Beginning with this ninth vision, Nephi’s visions explore the opposition the building represents to God and how he responds to that opposition.

Today’s reading is the twenty-third in this series and is the seventh of thirteen that explore the twelfth (and longest) of the fourteen visions.

1. This vision, like each vision, was granted Nephi in response to his request to know the interpretation and meaning of the tree he and his father had seen.
 - ? What does today’s reading contribute to your understanding concerning the meaning and significance of the tree?
2. This vision also reveals the character of the great and spacious building, its opposition to God, and/or God’s response to its opposition.
 - ? What does today’s reading contribute to your understanding of the great and spacious building, its opposition to God, and/or God’s response to its opposition?
3. With the discovery of the Dead Sea scrolls, it has become clear that the text of the Old Testament has remained largely unchanged at least since the 1st and 2nd centuries B.C. This means that the Christian church has made few if any significant changes to the Old Testament and that any changes to the Old Testament came at the hands of Jews before the first two centuries BC, and so, before Christianity came to be.
 - ? How do these facts impact the way you understand this reading?
 - ? How do they impact the way you feel and approach the Old Testament?
4. The earliest New Testament texts, text fragments, and text quotations that we possess are not significantly different from the text as we have it today. Differences are minor and not of a doctrinal nature. This means that if there were significant doctrinal changes made to the text, they came almost immediately and were made by the first generation or two of church leaders.
 - ? How do these facts impact the way you understand this reading?
 - ? How do they impact the way you feel and approach the New Testament?

5. Today's reading blames doctrinal changes to the text on "the great and abominable church." However, we know that the early Christian church was not responsible for significant doctrinal changes to the Biblical texts.

- ? Given these facts, how are we to understand "the great and abominable church"?
- ? How would you respond to the suggestion that since the Bible is essentially the same as it originally was, any corruption of the Bible is not textual but interpretative and behavioral?
- ? Put differently, how would you feel about reading "they have taken away from the gospel of the Lamb many parts which are plain and most precious; and also many covenants of the Lord have they taken away," not in textual terms, but in interpretive and behavioral terms?

Earlier, in describing "the great and abominable church," Nephi informed us,

"I also saw gold, and silver, and silks, and scarlets, and fine-twined linen, and all manner of precious clothing; and I saw many harlots. And the angel spake unto me, saying: 'Behold *the gold, and the silver, and the silks, and the scarlets, and the fine-twined linen, and the precious clothing, and the harlots, are the desires of this great and abominable church*'" (1 Ne. 13.⁷⁻⁸).

- ? How is the Bible interpreted to justify the idolatry of putting wealth, power, and prestige above God and His principles?
- ? How do you feel and what do you think when you consider that the Bible is corrupted by anyone and any institution—secular or religious—that justifies the sort of idolatrous ideology and behavior that puts wealth, power, and prestige above God and His principles?

1 Nephi 11–14— the visions of Nephi (13.^{29–32}): questionnaire 24

²⁹And after these plain and precious things were taken away it goeth forth unto all the nations of the Gentiles; and after it goeth forth unto all the nations of the Gentiles, yea, even across the many waters which thou hast seen with the Gentiles which have gone forth out of captivity, thou seest—because of the many plain and precious things which have been taken out of the book, which were plain unto the understanding of the children of men, according to the plainness which is in the Lamb of God—because of these things which are taken away out of the gospel of the Lamb, an exceedingly great many do stumble, yea, insomuch that Satan hath great power over them.

³⁰Nevertheless, thou beholdest that the Gentiles who have gone forth out of captivity, and have been lifted up by the power of God above all other nations, upon the face of the land which is choice above all other lands, which is the land that the Lord God hath covenanted with thy father that his seed should have for the land of their inheritance; wherefore, thou seest that the Lord God will not suffer that the Gentiles will utterly destroy the mixture of thy seed, which are among thy brethren. ³¹Neither will he suffer that the Gentiles shall destroy the seed of thy brethren. ³²Neither will the Lord God suffer that the Gentiles shall forever remain in that awful state of blindness, which thou beholdest they are in, because of the plain and most precious parts of the gospel of the Lamb which have been kept back by that abominable church, whose formation thou hast seen.

1 Nephi 11-14 represent a series of revelations Nephi received in response to his desire to understand the meaning and significance of his father's dream, often referred to as "The Tree of Life Vision."

Based on a literary pattern found within Nephi's series of visions, we understand Nephi to have received 14 visions.* We explore this pattern as we work our way through the narrative. In order to have manageably short readings, we have divided the 14 visions into 33 separate daily readings.

The first eight visions focus on Christ and his earthly ministry. With the ninth vision Nephi saw Jesus' death by crucifixion and that its "inspiration" came from a competing and opposing force, symbolized by the great and spacious building. Beginning with this ninth vision, Nephi's visions explore the opposition the building represents to God and how he responds to that opposition.

Today's reading is the twenty-fourth in this series and is the eighth of thirteen that explore the twelfth (and longest) of the fourteen visions.

1. This vision, like each vision, was granted Nephi in response to his request to know the interpretation and meaning of the tree he and his father had seen.
 - ? What does today's reading contribute to your understanding concerning the meaning and significance of the tree?
2. This vision also reveals the character of the great and spacious building, its opposition to God, and/or God's response to its opposition.
 - ? What does today's reading contribute to your understanding of the great and spacious building, its opposition to God, and/or God's response to its opposition?
3. We have suggested in previous readings that the corruption of the Bible was not textual—the Bible as we have it today is as it was before the rise of the Christian church—but doctrinal and theological. Because of this corruption, Nephi saw that among the gentiles who had come to America from Europe "an exceedingly great many do stumble, yea, insomuch that Satan hath great power over them."

- ? What sorts of early American traditions, attitudes, and norms might be regarded as a “stumble” and, worse, satanically inspired and directed?
 - ? Would you include American slavery of Africans? Genocide against native American’s? Priority of profit over justice toward all? Others? Why do you answer as you do?
4. Immediately upon announcing the stumbling of American gentiles because of the power they gave to Satan, Nephi assures his readers that “the Lord God will not suffer that the Gentiles will utterly destroy the mixture of thy seed, which are among thy brethren. Neither will he suffer that the Gentiles shall destroy the seed of thy brethren.”
- ? What does this tell you about the Lord’s attitude toward the killing and attempted genocide of Native Americans?
5. Some might read of “the Gentiles who have gone forth out of captivity, and have been lifted up by the power of God above all other nations” and think that those same gentiles (Americans) are “righteous.” But, this reading makes it clear that they were not “righteous,” but “stumble[d], yea, insomuch that Satan hath great power over them.”
- ? How do you square them being “lifted up by the power of God” at the same time that “Satan hath great power over them”?
 - ? What is the danger of any people anywhere and anytime thinking they are “righteous” based upon the fact that they might be powerful and successful?
 - ? What is the danger of attributing individual or societal power or success to God?

³³“Wherefore saith the Lamb of God: I will be merciful unto the Gentiles, unto the visiting of the remnant of the house of Israel in great judgment.”

³⁴And *the angel of the Lord spake unto me, saying: “Behold, saith the Lamb of God, after I have visited the remnant of the house of Israel—and this remnant of whom I speak is the seed of thy father—wherefore, after I have visited them in judgment, and smitten them by the hand of the Gentiles, and after the Gentiles do stumble exceedingly, because of the most plain and precious parts of the gospel of the Lamb which have been kept back by that abominable church, which is the mother of harlots, saith the Lamb—I will be merciful unto the Gentiles in that day, insomuch that I will bring forth unto them, in mine own power, much of my gospel, which shall be plain and precious, saith the Lamb.

³⁵“For, behold, saith the Lamb: I will manifest myself unto thy seed, that they shall write many things which I shall minister unto them, which shall be plain and precious; and after thy seed shall be destroyed, and dwindle in unbelief, and also the seed of thy brethren, behold, these things shall be hid up, to come forth unto the Gentiles, by the gift and power of the Lamb. ³⁶And in them shall be written my gospel, saith the Lamb, and my rock and my salvation.

1 Nephi 11-14 represent a series of revelations Nephi received in response to his desire to understand the meaning and significance of his father’s dream, often referred to as “The Tree of Life Vision.”

Based on a literary pattern found within Nephi’s series of visions, we understand Nephi to have received 14 visions.* We explore this pattern as we work our way through the narrative. In order to have manageably short readings, we have divided the 14 visions into 33 separate daily readings.

The first eight visions focus on Christ and his earthly ministry. With the ninth vision Nephi saw Jesus’ death by crucifixion and that its “inspiration” came from a competing and opposing force, symbolized by the great and spacious building. Beginning with this ninth vision, Nephi’s visions explore the opposition the building represents to God and how he responds to that opposition.

Today’s reading is the twenty-fifth in this series and is the ninth of thirteen that explore the twelfth (and longest) of the fourteen visions.

1. This vision, like each vision, was granted Nephi in response to his request to know the interpretation and meaning of the tree he and his father had seen.
 - ? What does today’s reading contribute to your understanding concerning the meaning and significance of the tree?
2. This vision also reveals the character of the great and spacious building, its opposition to God, and/or God’s response to its opposition.
 - ? What does today’s reading contribute to your understanding of the great and spacious building, its opposition to God, and/or God’s response to its opposition?
3. Nephi sees that God “will be merciful unto the Gentiles, unto the visiting of the remnant of the house of Israel in great judgment.” He further states that Lehi’s descendants would be “smitten... by the hand of the Gentiles.”
 - ? What does all this mean to you?
 - ? Should this be read as justification for how white America treated native America, including the genocidal programs perpetrated against them? Why do you answer as you do?
 - ? What role did the corruption of the Bible play in the genocide?

4. We have seen in previous readings that because of the corruption of the Bible many American “gentiles” “stumble” as they are in an “awful state of blindness” and “Satan hath great power over them.” In today’s reading the Lord promises to rectify the awful consequences of Biblical corruption.
? How will he rectify the gentile “stumbling,” “blindness,” and subservience to Satan?
5. In being part of God’s plan for enlightening the gentiles, the Book of Mormon is to be “plain.”
? What does this mean to you?
? Do you find it to be plain? To what examples would you point as examples of its “plainness”?
? In your mind, how “plain” is the Book of Mormon in regard to gentile genocide of native Americans? Why do you answer as you do?

³⁷And blessed are they who shall seek to bring forth my Zion at that day, for they shall have the gift and the power of the Holy Ghost; and if they endure unto the end they shall be lifted up at the last day, and shall be saved in the everlasting kingdom of the Lamb; and whoso shall publish peace, yea, tidings of great joy, how beautiful upon the mountains shall they be.

1 Nephi 11-14 represent a series of revelations Nephi received in response to his desire to understand the meaning and significance of his father's dream, often referred to as "The Tree of Life Vision."

Based on a literary pattern found within Nephi's series of visions, we understand Nephi to have received 14 visions.* We explore this pattern as we work our way through the narrative. In order to have manageably short readings, we have divided the 14 visions into 33 separate daily readings.

The first eight visions focus on Christ and his earthly ministry. With the ninth vision Nephi saw Jesus' death by crucifixion and that its "inspiration" came from a competing and opposing force, symbolized by the great and spacious building. Beginning with this ninth vision, Nephi's visions explore the opposition the building represents to God and how he responds to that opposition.

Today's reading is the twenty-sixth in this series and is the tenth of thirteen that explore the twelfth (and longest) of the fourteen visions.

1. This vision, like each vision, was granted Nephi in response to his request to know the interpretation and meaning of the tree he and his father had seen.
 - ? What does today's reading contribute to your understanding concerning the meaning and significance of the tree?
2. This vision also reveals the character of the great and spacious building, its opposition to God, and/or God's response to its opposition.
 - ? What does today's reading contribute to your understanding of the great and spacious building, its opposition to God, and/or God's response to its opposition?
3. We have maintained that the great and spacious building, representing the pride and wisdom of the world (or that in which the world takes pride and that which the world has skill in) is to be associated with the great and abominable church. Both are representations of the lust for wealth, power, and prestige. In today's reading, we find one of God's responses to the world's pride, wisdom and lusts.
 - ? What is the nature of that response?
4. In this reading, God pronounces a blessing on those "who shall seek to bring forth my Zion."
 - ? What is Zion?
 - ? How does God seek to counterbalance the world's pride, wisdom, and lust for wealth, power, and prestige through Zion?
 - ? What would you think if we suggested that at its very heart Zion is the exact opposite of the great and spacious building/ the great and abominable church in that it is the rejection of lust for wealth, power, and prestige?
 - ? How does the following passage relate to and reflect this opposition to the world's pride, wisdom, and lust?

"And the Lord called his people Zion, because they were of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there was no poor among them" (Moses 7.¹⁸).
 - ? How does the lust for wealth, power, and prestige serve to undermine and destroy feeling of unity

with others?

5. The Lord promises that those who partake of the spirit of Zion “shall have the gift and the power of the Holy Ghost.”
 - ? How does the drive/ lust for wealth, power, and prestige squelch the power of the spirit in our lives?
 - ? How does the following scripture confirm the deleterious effect of the world’s pride, wisdom, and lust?

“Nevertheless, in your temporal things you shall be equal, and this not grudgingly, otherwise the abundance of the manifestations of the Spirit shall be withheld” (DC 70.¹⁴).
 - ? How does economic inequality disrupt unity with others and with the Holy Spirit?

1 Nephi 11–14— the visions of Nephi (13.^{38–42}): questionnaire 27

³⁸And *I beheld the remnant of the seed of my brethren, and also the book of the Lamb of God, which had proceeded forth from the mouth of the Jew, that it came forth from the Gentiles unto the remnant of the seed of my brethren. ³⁹And after it had come forth unto them I beheld other books, which came forth by the power of the Lamb, from the Gentiles unto them, unto the convincing of the Gentiles and the remnant of the seed of my brethren, and also the Jews who were scattered upon all the face of the earth, that the records of the prophets and of the twelve apostles of the Lamb are true.

⁴⁰And the angel spake unto me, saying: “These last records, which thou hast seen among the Gentiles, shall establish the truth of the first, which are of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, and shall make known the plain and precious things which have been taken away from them; and shall make known to all kindreds, tongues, and people, that the Lamb of God is the Son of the Eternal Father, and the Savior of the world; and that all men must come unto him, or they cannot be saved. ⁴¹And they must come according to the words which shall be established by the mouth of the Lamb; and the words of the Lamb shall be made known in the records of thy seed, as well as in the records of the twelve apostles of the Lamb; wherefore they both shall be established in one; for there is one God and one Shepherd over all the earth.

⁴²And the time cometh that he shall manifest himself unto all nations, both unto the Jews and also unto the Gentiles; and after he has manifested himself unto the Jews and also unto the Gentiles, then he shall manifest himself unto the Gentiles and also unto the Jews, and the last shall be first, and the first shall be last.”

1 Nephi 11-14 represent a series of revelations Nephi received in response to his desire to understand the meaning and significance of his father’s dream, often referred to as “The Tree of Life Vision.”

Based on a literary pattern found within Nephi’s series of visions, we understand Nephi to have received 14 visions. We will explore this pattern as we work our way through the narrative.* In order to have manageably short readings, we will divide the 14 visions into 33 separate daily readings.

The first eight visions focus on Christ and his earthly ministry. With the ninth vision Nephi saw Jesus’ death by crucifixion and that its “inspiration” came from a competing and opposing force, symbolized by the great and spacious building. Beginning with this ninth vision, Nephi’s visions explore the opposition the building represents to God and how he responds to that opposition.

Today’s reading is the twenty-seventh in this series and is the eleventh of thirteen that explore the twelfth (and longest) of the fourteen visions.

1. This vision, like each vision, was granted Nephi in response to his request to know the interpretation and meaning of the tree he and his father had seen.
 - ? What does today’s reading contribute to your understanding concerning the meaning and significance of the tree?
2. This vision also reveals the character of the great and spacious building, its opposition to God, and/or God’s response to its opposition.
 - ? What does today’s reading contribute to your understanding of the great and spacious building, its opposition to God, and/or God’s response to its opposition?
3. After seeing the Bible among his brother’s seed, Nephi “beheld other books, which came forth by the power of the Lamb, from the Gentiles unto them.”
 - ? What are these other books?

Nephi saw that “these other books” were “unto the convincing of the Gentiles and the remnant of the seed of my brethren, and also the Jews who were scattered upon all the face of the earth, that the records of the prophets and of the twelve apostles of the Lamb are true. These other books would also “establish the truth of the first [the Bible].

- ? How do these other books—Book of Mormon, DC—serve to convince you of the truth and importance of the Bible?
 - ? What are the natural consequences in your daily and spiritual life of an increased conviction of the Bible’s truth and importance?
4. Finally, Nephi teaches that “there is one God and one Shepherd over all the earth” who shall manifest himself unto all nations... has manifested himself unto the Jews... and shall manifest himself unto the Gentiles.”
- ? How does Nephi’s testimony compare with Mormon’s stated purpose of the Book of Mormon: that of “convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God, manifesting himself unto all nations?
 - ? What is the significance of Jesus being called the “one God and one Shepherd over all the earth”?
 - ? When the text speaks of Jesus manifesting himself unto all nations, does this “manifesting” include personal manifestation of himself to individuals or only to “nations,” i.e., group manifestation? Why do you answer as you do?

¹And * if the Gentiles shall hearken unto the Lamb of God in that day that he shall manifest himself unto them in word, and also in power, in very deed, unto the taking away of their stumbling blocks—

²And harden not their hearts against the Lamb of God, they shall be numbered among the seed of thy father; yea, they shall be numbered among the house of Israel; and they shall be a blessed people upon the promised land forever; they shall be no more brought down into captivity; and the house of Israel shall no more be confounded.

³And that great pit, which hath been digged for them by that great and abominable church, which was founded by the devil and his children, that he might lead away the souls of men down to hell— yea, that great pit which hath been digged for the destruction of men shall be filled by those who digged it, unto their utter destruction, saith the Lamb of God; not the destruction of the soul, save it be the casting of it into that hell which hath no end. ⁴For behold, this is according to the captivity of the devil, and also according to the justice of God, upon all those who will work wickedness and abomination before him.”

1 Nephi 11-14 represent a series of revelations Nephi received in response to his desire to understand the meaning and significance of his father’s dream, often referred to as “The Tree of Life Vision.”

Based on a literary pattern found within Nephi’s series of visions, we understand Nephi to have received 14 visions. We will explore this pattern as we work our way through the narrative.* In order to have manageably short readings, we will divide the 14 visions into 33 separate daily readings.

The first eight visions focus on Christ and his earthly ministry. With the ninth vision Nephi saw Jesus’ death by crucifixion and that its “inspiration” came from a competing and opposing force, symbolized by the great and spacious building. Beginning with this ninth vision, Nephi’s visions explore the opposition the building represents to God and how he responds to that opposition.

Today’s reading is the twenty-eighth in this series and is the twelfth of thirteen that explore the twelfth (and longest) of the fourteen visions.

1. This vision, like each vision, was granted Nephi in response to his request to know the interpretation and meaning of the tree he and his father had seen.
 - ? What does today’s reading contribute to your understanding concerning the meaning and significance of the tree?
2. This vision also reveals the character of the great and spacious building, its opposition to God, and/or God’s response to its opposition.
 - ? What does today’s reading contribute to your understanding of the great and spacious building, its opposition to God, and/or God’s response to its opposition?
3. Nephi speaks of God manifesting himself “in word, and also in power, in very deed, unto the taking away of... stumbling blocks.”
 - ? How has God manifest himself “in word” in your nation and in your life?
 - ? How has God manifest himself “in power” in your nation and in your life?
 - ? How has God manifest himself “in very deed” in your nation and in your life?
 - ? What “stumbling blocks” has God taken away in your nation and in your life through manifesting himself in word, power, and very deed?
4. As does the Old Testament, Nephi likens hell to a “great pit.”

? What do you think and feel when you contemplate this imagery for hell?

Nephi says that the pit, or hell, was “digged... by that great abominable church.”

? What does this mean to you?

? What does the great abominable church do and say to prepare hell for those who will not hearken to the Lamb of God?

⁵And *the angel spake unto me, Nephi, saying: “Thou hast beheld that if the Gentiles repent it shall be well with them; and thou also knowest concerning the covenants of the Lord unto the house of Israel; and thou also hast heard that whoso repenteth not must perish. ⁶Therefore, wo be unto the Gentiles if it so be that they harden their hearts against the Lamb of God. ⁷For the time cometh, saith the Lamb of God, that I will work a great and a marvelous work among the children of men; a work which shall be everlasting, either on the one hand or on the other—either to the convincing of them unto peace and life eternal, or unto the deliverance of them to the hardness of their hearts and the blindness of their minds unto their being brought down into captivity, and also into destruction, both temporally and spiritually, according to the captivity of the devil, of which I have spoken.”

1 Nephi 11-14 represent a series of revelations Nephi received in response to his desire to understand the meaning and significance of his father’s dream, often referred to as “The Tree of Life Vision.”

Based on a literary pattern found within Nephi’s series of visions, we understand Nephi to have received 14 visions. We will explore this pattern as we work our way through the narrative.* In order to have manageably short readings, we will divide the 14 visions into 33 separate daily readings.

Today’s reading is the twenty-ninth in this series and is the last of thirteen that explore the twelfth (and longest) of the fourteen visions.

The first eight visions were focused on Christ and his earthly ministry. With the ninth vision Nephi saw Jesus’ death by crucifixion and that its “inspiration” came from a competing and opposing force, symbolized by the great and spacious building. Beginning with this ninth vision, Nephi’s visions explore the opposition the building represents to God and how he responds to that opposition.

1. This vision, like each vision, was granted Nephi in response to his request to know the interpretation and meaning of the tree he and his father had seen.
 - ? What does today’s reading contribute to your understanding concerning the meaning and significance of the tree?
2. This vision also reveals the character of the great and spacious building, its opposition to God, and/or God’s response to its opposition.
 - ? What does today’s reading contribute to your understanding of the great and spacious building, its opposition to God, and/or God’s response to its opposition?
3. The angel pronounces a “wo unto the Gentiles if it so be that they harden their hearts against the Lamb of God.”
 - ? In your view, of what does hardening the heart against Jesus entail?
4. The angel lays out the two ways open to humanity. On the one hand is “peace and life eternal.” On the other hand is “being brought down into captivity, and also into destruction, both temporally and spiritually.”
 - ? What is your understanding of these two ways given the LDS theology of degrees of glory?

⁹*He said unto me: “Look,” and behold that great and abominable church, which is the mother of abominations, whose founder is the devil. ¹⁰And he said unto me: “Behold there are save two churches only; the one is the church of the Lamb of God, and the other is the church of the devil; wherefore, whoso belongeth not to the church of the Lamb of God belongeth to that great church, which is the mother of abominations; and she is the whore of all the earth.” ¹¹*I looked and beheld the whore of all the earth, and she sat upon many waters; and she had dominion over all the earth, among all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people.

1 Nephi 11-14 represent a series of revelations Nephi received in response to his desire to understand the meaning and significance of his father’s dream, often referred to as “The Tree of Life Vision.”

Based on a literary pattern found within Nephi’s series of visions, we understand Nephi to have received 14 visions. We will explore this pattern as we work our way through the narrative.* In order to have manageably short readings, we will divide the 14 visions into 33 separate daily readings.

Today’s reading is the thirtieth in this series and is the first of three that explore the thirteenth of the fourteen visions.

The first eight visions were focused on Christ and his earthly ministry. With the ninth vision Nephi saw Jesus’ death by crucifixion and that its “inspiration” came from a competing and opposing force, symbolized by the great and spacious building. Beginning with this ninth vision, Nephi’s visions explore the opposition the building represents to God and how he responds to that opposition.

1. This vision, like each vision, was granted Nephi in response to his request to know the interpretation and meaning of the tree he and his father had seen.
 - ? What does today’s reading contribute to your understanding concerning the meaning and significance of the tree?
2. This vision also reveals the character of the great and spacious building, its opposition to God, and/or God’s response to its opposition.
 - ? What does today’s reading contribute to your understanding of the great and spacious building, its opposition to God, and/or God’s response to its opposition?
3. The angel describes the great and abominable church as “the mother of abominations” and as “the whore of all earth.”
 - ? How do you feel about these descriptions?
 - ? What do you learn about the great and abominable church from these descriptions?

The great and abominable church is the “pride of the world,” or, as we have put it, “that in which the world takes pride.” The visions have identified wealth, power, and prestige as those things in which the world takes pride.

- ? How, then, does the desire for and accumulation of wealth, power, and prestige serve as “mother” of all abominations?
- ? How does this compare with Paul’s assertion that “the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows” (1 Tim. 6.¹⁰).
- ? How is the desire for and accumulation of wealth, power, and prestige a form of prostitution?

- ? What does the graphic imagery—especially that of a “whore”—tell you about the Lord’s intense feelings about wealth, power, and prestige and the individuals, organizations, and institutions that seek them?
4. In beholding the “whore of all the earth,” Nephi saw that “she sat upon many waters; and she had dominion over all the earth, among all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people.”
- ? What do you think and feel as you consider the near universality of this form of whoredom and the pervasiveness of with which it dominates the world?
 - ? What do you think and feel when you contemplate the dominance that wealth, power, and prestige have on the hearts and minds of humanity?
 - ? Do you agree with the angel’s assessment of world conditions? Why do you answer as you do?
 - ? To what specific things would you point as evidence for the world’s prioritization of wealth, power, and prestige?
 - ? What can you do to avoid being implicated in this same crime—for prostitution is a crime?
 - ? What can you do to try and keep your society/ nation from engaging in this same crime?
 - ? What are the evidences that individuals and societies/ nations are not engaged in the crime of prostitution—giving themselves up to wealth, power, and prestige?
5. The angel asserts that “there are save two churches only.”
- ? What do you think and feel when you read this?
 - ? One church (it’s members) takes pride in and finds security and meaning through wealth, power, and prestige. One church does not take pride in, or find security and meaning in wealth, power, and prestige,
 - ? To which church do you belong? What evidence would others find in your life to affirm your answer?

¹²*I beheld the church of the Lamb of God, and its numbers were few, because of the wickedness and abominations of the whore who sat upon many waters; nevertheless, I beheld that the church of the Lamb, who were the saints of God, were also upon all the face of the earth; and their dominions upon the face of the earth were small, because of the wickedness of the great whore whom I saw.

¹³*I beheld that the great mother of abominations did gather together multitudes upon the face of all the earth, among all the nations of the Gentiles, to fight against the Lamb of God.

¹⁴*I, Nephi, beheld the power of the Lamb of God, that it descended upon the saints of the church of the Lamb, and upon the covenant people of the Lord, who were scattered upon all the face of the earth; and they were armed with righteousness and with the power of God in great glory.

1 Nephi 11-14 represent a series of revelations Nephi received in response to his desire to understand the meaning and significance of his father's dream, often referred to as "The Tree of Life Vision."

Based on a literary pattern found within Nephi's series of visions, we understand Nephi to have received 14 visions. We will explore this pattern as we work our way through the narrative.* In order to have manageably short readings, we will divide the 14 visions into 33 separate daily readings.

Today's reading is the thirty-first in this series and is the second of three that explore the thirteenth of the fourteen visions.

The first eight visions were focused on Christ and his earthly ministry. With the ninth vision Nephi saw Jesus' death by crucifixion and that its "inspiration" came from a competing and opposing force, symbolized by the great and spacious building. Beginning with this ninth vision, Nephi's visions explore the opposition the building represents to God and how he responds to that opposition.

1. This vision, like each vision, was granted Nephi in response to his request to know the interpretation and meaning of the tree he and his father had seen.
 - ? What does today's reading contribute to your understanding concerning the meaning and significance of the tree?
2. This vision also reveals the character of the great and spacious building, its opposition to God, and/or God's response to its opposition.
 - ? What does today's reading contribute to your understanding of the great and spacious building, its opposition to God, and/or God's response to its opposition?
3. Nephi sees that "the church of the Lamb of God" was "few" in numbers "because of the wickedness and abominations of the whore who sat upon many waters."
 - ? What is it about the "wickedness and abominations of the whore," which is another way of referencing the "great and spacious building"/ the "pride of the world," that makes it so effective in limiting the number of members of the "church of the Lamb of God"?
 - ? How does the prioritization of wealth, power, and prestige (influence), keep one from fully committing to the Lamb of God?
4. Nephi sees that "the church of the Lamb of God" was "armed with righteousness and with the power of God in great glory."
 - ? What do you see when you think of being "armed with righteousness" and "the power of God"?
 - ? What do you see in your mind when you imagine the "great glory" that surrounds "the church of the Lamb of God"?

5. As he has done through much of this vision, Nephi continues to refer to the “great and abominable church” as a “whore” and as “the mother of abomination.”
 - ? How does the desire for wealth, power, and prestige (influence)—or that in which the word takes pride; i.e., “the pride of the world”—serve as mother of, or give birth to “abomination”?

¹⁵*I beheld that the wrath of God was poured out upon that great and abominable church, inasmuch that there were wars and rumors of wars among all the nations and kindreds of the earth. ¹⁶And as there began to be wars and rumors of wars among all the nations which belonged to the mother of abominations, the angel spake unto me, saying: “Behold, the wrath of God is upon the mother of harlots; and behold, thou seest all these things—¹⁷And when the day cometh that the wrath of God is poured out upon the mother of harlots, which is the great and abominable church of all the earth, whose founder is the devil, then, at that day, the work of the Father shall commence, in preparing the way for the fulfilling of his covenants, which he hath made to his people who are of the house of Israel.”

1 Nephi 11-14 represent a series of revelations Nephi received in response to his desire to understand the meaning and significance of his father’s dream, often referred to as “The Tree of Life Vision.”

Based on a literary pattern found within Nephi’s series of visions, we understand Nephi to have received 14 visions. We will explore this pattern as we work our way through the narrative.* In order to have manageably short readings, we will divide the 14 visions into 33 separate daily readings.

Today’s reading is the thirty-second in this series and is the last of three that explore the thirteenth of the fourteen visions.

The first eight visions were focused on Christ and his earthly ministry. With the ninth vision Nephi saw Jesus’ death by crucifixion and that its “inspiration” came from a competing and opposing force, symbolized by the great and spacious building. Beginning with this ninth vision, Nephi’s visions explore the opposition the building represents to God and how he responds to that opposition.

1. This vision, like each vision, was granted Nephi in response to his request to know the interpretation and meaning of the tree he and his father had seen.
 - ? What does today’s reading contribute to your understanding concerning the meaning and significance of the tree?
2. This vision also reveals the character of the great and spacious building, its opposition to God, and/or God’s response to its opposition.
 - ? What does today’s reading contribute to your understanding of the great and spacious building, its opposition to God, and/or God’s response to its opposition?
3. At the opening of this 13th vision, Nephi saw the two “churches” that stand opposed to one another in this world. We understand these two “churches” as two ideologies. They represent “the tree” that is at the center of the vision and the “great and spacious building” that stands as its opposite, opponent, and nemesis. The ideology represented by “the tree” is one that is based on love, self-sacrifice, and the advancement of others before self. Jesus is this ideology’s best representation. The other ideology, that of the “great and spacious building,” is one that is based on selfishness and pride. It has wealth, power, and prestige/ influence as its principal aims. Nephi saw that the second ideology dominated the world stage, while the first ideology had few adherents and was the subject of constant attack from the second.
 - ? What is the state of the great and abominable church/ great and spacious building/ second ideology?

4. We have seen much of “battle,” “fighting,” “slaughter,” “wars and rumors of wars” in the course of Nephi’s visions. Nephi characterized the history of his people as one of wars and rumors of wars due to their apostasy.

“I beheld multitudes gathered together to battle, one against the other; and I beheld wars, and rumors of wars, and great slaughters with the sword among my people. *I beheld many generations pass away, after the manner of wars and contentions in the land; and I beheld many cities, yea, even that I did not number them” (1 Ne. 12.²⁻³).

Now, Nephi characterizes the latter-days as a time of “wars and rumors of wars.

- ? How do you feel about this characterization? Does it ring true to you and what you have seen in and learned about the world? Why do you answer as you do?
 - ? How does the world’s/ great and spacious building’s/ great and abominable church’s ideology putting the acquisition and maintenance of wealth, power, and prestige/ influence contribute to this environment of constant conflict, war, and death?
5. The Angels sees all the “wars and rumors of wars” as indication of “the wrath of God.”
- ? How do you feel about this?
 - ? Should God, then, be seen as the purveyor of war? Why do you answer as you do?
 - ? How do you explain the angel’s statement such that God is not made to be responsible for human conflict, violence, and war?
6. With the escalation of conflict, violence, and war, God commences “in preparing the way for the fulfilling of his covenants, which he hath made to his people who are of the house of Israel.”
- ? What does this mean to you?
 - ? What covenants, do you think, is the angel talking about?
 - ? How has human conflict, violence, and war served to give God inroads into accomplishing his purposes?
 - ? How do you balance this strange benefit of war with the vile, destructive, and murderous nature of war and the disciple’s call to “renounce war and proclaim peace” (See DC 98.¹⁶)?

¹⁸*The angel spake unto me, saying: “Look!”

¹⁹And I looked and beheld a man, and he was dressed in a white robe.

²⁰And the angel said unto me: “Behold one of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. ²¹Behold, he shall see and write the remainder of these things; yea, and also many things which have been. ²²And he shall also write concerning the end of the world. ²³Wherefore, the things which he shall write are just and true; and behold they are written in the book which thou beheld proceeding out of the mouth of the Jew; and at the time they proceeded out of the mouth of the Jew, or, at the time the book proceeded out of the mouth of the Jew, the things which were written were plain and pure, and most precious and easy to the understanding of all men. ²⁴And behold, the things which this apostle of the Lamb shall write are many things which thou hast seen; and behold, the remainder shalt thou see.

“But the things which thou shalt see hereafter thou shalt not write; for the Lord God hath ordained the apostle of the Lamb of God that he should write them. ²⁶And also others who have been, to them hath he shown all things, and they have written them; and they are sealed up to come forth in their purity, according to the truth which is in the Lamb, in the own due time of the Lord, unto the house of Israel.”

²⁷And I, Nephi, heard and bear record, that the name of the apostle of the Lamb was John, according to the word of the angel.

²⁸And behold, I, Nephi, am forbidden that I should write the remainder of the things which I saw and heard; wherefore the things which I have written sufficeth me; and I have written but a small part of the things which I saw. ²⁹And I bear record that I saw the things which my father saw, and the angel of the Lord did make them known unto me. ³⁰And now I make an end of speaking concerning the things which I saw while I was carried away in the Spirit; and if all the things which I saw are not written, the things which I have written are true. And thus it is. Amen.

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Based on a literary pattern found within Nephi’s series of visions, we understand Nephi to have received 14 visions. We will explore this pattern as we work our way through the narrative.* In order to have manageably short readings, we will divide the 14 visions into 33 separate daily readings.

Today’s reading is the thirty-third and final in this series. It explores the final of the fourteen visions.

The first eight visions were focused on Christ and his earthly ministry. With the ninth vision Nephi saw Jesus’ death by crucifixion and that its “inspiration” came from a competing and opposing force, symbolized by the great and spacious building. Beginning with this ninth vision, Nephi’s visions explore the opposition the building represents to God and how he responds to that opposition.

1. This final vision, however, shifts from Lehi’s vision and its interpretation and insights to Nephi’s own visions as well of those of John the Revelator.
 - ? What do you learn from this reading about what we assume is the New Testament Book of Revelation?
2. There are 27 Books found in the New Testament. The Book of Revelation is the only one specifically mentioned in the Book of Mormon.
 - ? What do you make of this observation?

- ? Does it offer any insight into the significance of Revelations? If so, what insight does it offer?
 - ? What priority do you give to the Book of Revelations in your own scripture study? Does this priority comport with the importance that Nephi seems to grant it? Why do you answer as you do?
 - ? What gospel insights have you gleaned from the Book of Revelations?
 - ? What insights to the world around you have you gleaned from the Book of Revelations?
3. Nephi makes the same observation about the Book of Revelations that he made about the rest of the Bible, i.e., “the things which were written were plain and pure, and most precious and easy to the understanding of all men.” We have noted in our questionnaires, meditations, and homilies that there is very little evidence that the Bible is significantly different than it was when it was written. We can feel confident, then, that the Book of Revelations is as plain, pure, precious, and easy as it was when it was written.
- ? What do you think and feel about these observations?
 - ? What do you think when you consider the easiness of understanding the Book of Revelations as we have it?
 - ? If it seems difficult, how do you feel about the suggesting that it is our approach to and manner of reading the Book that should be altered rather than the words themselves?
4. Nephi was told not to write about some of the things that he saw because they were to be written by John.
- ? How do you feel about this, and why do you suppose this was so?
 - ? Nephi does say that there is some overlap between what he writes and what John will write. At some point, take some time reading through the Book of Revelations with an eye toward identifying principles and events that might also be found in Nephi’s vision.
5. Nephi concludes his visions with a personal testimony.
- ? What do you feel as you read his heart-felt testimony?