

## Rel A 304 Reading Questions for Tuesday, December 12

3 Nephi 15–16  
3 Nephi 20:10–23:5

Today we're looking at Jesus's teachings to the Lehites (Nephites + Lamanites). We're just getting a slice of what He taught them, focusing on the places where He uses Isaiah to teach about His covenant.

### Jesus Clarifies What Is Fulfilled and What Continues (3 Nephi 15:1–10)

Jesus first appears to the Lehites in 3 Nephi 11, and in 3 Nephi 12–14 he gives them a New-World version of the Sermon on the Mount (the original, Old-World version appears in Matthew 5–7). The new version reads mostly the same but there are several small deletions, additions, and revisions. One addition appears in 3 Nephi 12:46–47: “Therefore those things which were of old time, which were under the law, in me are all fulfilled. Old things are done away, and all things have become new” (3 Nephi 12:46–47).

After Jesus finishes this adaptation of the Sermon on the Mount, the Lehites have a big question, wondering “what he would concerning the law of Moses; for they understood not the saying that old things had passed away, and that all things had become new” (3 Nephi 15:2). To clarify what had ended and what had not, Jesus carefully distinguishes between the *covenant* He made with Israel vs. the *law* He gave the Israelites through Moses at Sinai. Jesus also bundled the prophecies of the Old Testament *prophets* into His explanation of the covenant because prophets like Isaiah had spoken of the covenant and foretold its fulfillment:

Marvel not that I said unto you that old things had passed away, and that all things had become new. Behold, I say unto you that the *law* is fulfilled that was given unto Moses. Behold, I am he that gave the *law*, and I am he who *covenanted* with my people Israel; therefore, the *law* in me is fulfilled, for I have come to fulfil the *law*; therefore *it* hath an end. Behold, I do not destroy the *prophets*, for as many as have not been fulfilled in me, verily I say unto you, shall all be fulfilled. And because I said unto you that old things have passed away, I do not destroy that which hath been spoken concerning *things which are to come*. For behold, the *covenant* which I have made with my people is not all fulfilled; but the *law* which was given unto Moses hath an end in me. Behold, I am the law, and the light. Look unto me, and endure to the end, and ye shall live; for unto him that endureth to the end will I give eternal life. Behold, I have given unto you the commandments; therefore keep my commandments. And this is the *law* and the *prophets*, for they truly testified of me. (3 Nephi 15:3–10, emphases added)

So, the specific commandments given in Moses's dispensation were temporary and replaceable, but the Abrahamic covenant and all the prophecies about it were still in force. The program was still that God would "bless thee [Israel]" (Genesis 12:2) and that "in thee shall all families of the earth [also] be blessed" (Genesis 12:3).

1. Jesus told the Lehites that "old things are done away, and all things have become new" (3 Nephi 12:47). That confused them, so Jesus clarified that what thing was now fulfilled and done? By contrast, what was unfulfilled and still in force?

### **Jesus Breaks Down the Various Remnants of Scattered Israel (3 Nephi 15:11–16:3)**

The Lehites got clarification that the covenant is still in force, but Israel's story has hardly been straightforward. They've been scattered far and wide, and many had fallen away or would fall away from the covenant. And there are still so many Gentile nations that have not even heard of Jesus Christ. How will God be able to bless both Israel and the Gentiles with "the blessings of salvation, even of life eternal" (Abraham 2:11)? That is the puzzle that Jesus now unfolds to the Lehites.

Jesus begins in 3 Nephi 15:11–16:3 by reiterating that the Jews back at Jerusalem are *not* all of the house of Israel. In addition to "your brethren at Jerusalem," He tells them, the Lehites themselves "are a remnant of the house of Joseph," and in addition to those two groups there are "other tribes of the house of Israel, whom the Father hath led away out of the land." Israel is bigger and more widespread than it would first appear.

### **Jesus Teaches about Latter-day Jews (3 Nephi 16:4–5)**

Next, in 3 Nephi 16:4, Jesus commands the Lehites to "write these sayings after I am gone." The Lehites will create a record of Jesus's teachings to them, and that record will be the basis for the abridged version that Mormon will later create (what we call the book of 3 Nephi). Jesus is delivering on a promise He made six centuries earlier to the prophet Nephi:

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. (1 Nephi 13:35)

This is exactly the plan Jesus outlines to the Lehites here: "I command you that ye shall write these sayings after I am gone, ... that these sayings which ye shall write shall be kept and shall be manifested unto the Gentiles" (3 Nephi 16:4).

2. In 3 Nephi 15 and 16, Jesus describes several groups of people: the Jews at Jerusalem, the Lehites in the Americas, “other tribes” of Israel scattered to undisclosed locations, and the Gentiles. Jesus commands the Lehites to write His sayings down because these specific teachings need to “be manifested” in the last days (in what we call the Book of Mormon). Of all the groups Jesus has mentioned, who in the last days would receive the Book of Mormon first?

After prophesying that the Lehite record “shall be manifested unto the Gentiles” (3 Nephi 16:4), Jesus explains the impact that the Book of Mormon will have on “the remnant of their seed,” meaning the latter-day descendants of “my people at Jerusalem,” the Jews. Because of the Book of Mormon, these latter-day Jews “may be brought in, or may be brought to a knowledge of me, their Redeemer. And then will I gather them in from them four quarters of the earth” (3 Nephi 16:4–5).

3. Jesus teaches the Lehites that the Book of Mormon will “be manifested” in the last days to the Gentiles and will then bring latter-day Jews to a knowledge of Him as their Redeemer. However, this restoration of knowledge will not just fulfill God’s covenant with the Jews. In 3 Nephi 16:5, Jesus teaches that after the Book of Mormon comes forth, He will also “fulfil the covenant which the Father hath made unto” whom?

### **Jesus Teaches about Latter-day Gentiles (3 Nephi 16:6–15)**

In 3 Nephi 16:6–15, Jesus teaches about the Gentiles in the latter days. Some Gentiles will be blessed “because of their belief in me, in and of the Holy Ghost” (3 Nephi 16:6). The belief of these Gentile Christians is part of the reason that the Book of Mormon comes forth through them, rather than through self-identified Israelites. But the appearance of the Book of Mormon will force all Gentiles to make a choice: will they respond to Christ’s words in that book and repent? Or will they “reject the fulness of my gospel” and persist in all manner of wickedness? As part of this explanation, Jesus invokes a prophecy about the remnant of Israel found in Micah 5:8:

8 ¶ And the <sup>a</sup>remnant of Jacob shall be among the Gentiles in the midst of many people as a <sup>b</sup>lion among the beasts of the forest, as a young <sup>c</sup>lion among the flocks of <sup>d</sup>sheep: who, if he go through, both treadeth down, and teareth in pieces, and none can deliver.

The context in Micah is that Gentiles have been oppressing the scattered Israelites remnants: “Many nations are gathered against thee, that say, Let her be defiled” (Micah 4:11), and “they shall smite the judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek” (Micah 5:1). But that oppression will not last forever. The time will come when God will turn the tables by empowering the remnant to successfully fight back against their Gentile oppressors, with the remnant symbolized by a lion and the Gentiles symbolized by sheep—just imagine how that confrontation will turn out.

4. In 3 Nephi 16:6–15, Jesus teaches about the Gentiles in the latter days. Jesus promises that “if the Gentiles will repent and return unto me, ... behold they shall be \_\_\_\_\_ among my people, O house of Israel.” Otherwise, the Gentiles will be subject to the “treading down” prophesied in Micah 5:8.

### **Jesus Teaches about Latter-day Lamanites by Quoting Isaiah 52:8–10 (3 Nephi 16:16–20)**

In 3 Nephi 16:16–20, Jesus shifts from latter-day Gentiles to the situation of the Lehite remnant. This particular branch of Israel no longer has Jerusalem as their inheritance, but instead “this people [has] *this land* for their inheritance,” referring to the land wherever Jesus was when He was speaking with them. Jesus then speaks of the fulfillment of Isaiah 52:8–10. This passage will be familiar to you not only from Isaiah but because it’s the passage (along with 52:7) that Abinadi had interpreted for Noah’s priests. Jesus, however, does not spiritualize the prophecy to talk about personal salvation, as Abinadi had done, but interprets it like Nephi would have, likening its ancient remnant story to a latter-day remnant story.

You remember the original context: Isaiah 52:8–10 describes watchmen on the ruined walls of Jerusalem who receive the news that “Thy God reigneth!”—Babylon has fallen, the exiled people are coming home! The waste places of Jerusalem sing together because Jehovah has redeemed Jerusalem, which will be rebuilt.

Jesus is likening this prophecy to the situation of the latter-day Lehties, which means He sees the two situations as being “like” each other. How are they similar? Jesus had already indicated to His Lehite audience that things would not go so well for their descendants, prophesying that wicked Gentiles would scatter them, cast them out, and tread them underfoot, causing them to be smitten, afflicted, slain, cast out, and hated (3 Nephi 16:9). You combine that with Jesus’s reiteration that “this land [is] for your inheritance” (3 Nephi 16:16), and the implication is pretty clear—the scattering and smiting that the Lehties will experience will cause them to lose that inheritance. But that’s when Isaiah’s words will find a new fulfillment for these latter-day Lehties. Like the Jews, they will be scattered and smitten, cast out and slain, but like their ancient cousins God will restore them to their land, causing them to “break forth into joy” and “sing together.”

5. During his first-day sermon in 3 Nephi 16, Jesus quotes Isaiah 52:8–10 (“Break forth into joy ... for the LORD hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem”). In its original context in the book of Isaiah, what is this passage describing? How does Jesus reapply for the Lehites?

### Jesus Prophecies concerning the Gentiles and Lehi’s Descendants in the Latter Days, Quoting Micah 5:8–9 and 4:12–13 (3 Nephi 20:10–20)

Notice that Jesus had barely gotten three verses into Isaiah before He sensed that the crowd was zoning out (“I perceive that ye are weak, that ye cannot understand all my words,” 3 Nephi 17:2). So He decided to take a break from the house of Israel discussion. He did some other things, ascended into heaven, and returned the next day. At 3 Nephi 20:10 he picks up that thread again.

In 3 Nephi 20:15–20, Jesus returns to the subject of the Gentiles in the latter days. He once again uses the prophecies of Micah, but this time quotes entire passages instead of making a brief allusion. Below I have arranged Micah’s original prophecy side by side with Jesus’s quotation. I have inserted ~~strikeouts~~ into the biblical text to show words Jesus doesn’t include, and have **bolded** words in Jesus’s quotation that He has added or changed.

MICAH 5:8–9 (KING JAMES VERSION)	JESUS IN 3 NEPHI 20:16–19
<del>And the</del> remnant of Jacob shall <del>be</del> among the Gentiles in the midst of many <del>people</del>	<b>Then shall ye, which are a remnant of the house of Jacob, go forth among them; and ye shall be in the midst of them which shall be many;</b>
as a lion among the beasts of the forest,  as a young lion among the flocks of sheep: who, if he go through, both treadeth down, and teareth in pieces, and none can deliver. Thine hand shall be lifted up upon thine adversaries, and all thine enemies shall be cut off.	<b>and ye shall be among them</b> as a lion among the beasts of the forest, <b>and</b> as a young lion among the flocks of sheep, who, if he goeth through both treadeth down and teareth in pieces, and none can deliver. Thy hand shall be lifted up upon thine adversaries,  and all thine enemies shall be cut off.
MICAH 4:12–13 (KING JAMES VERSION)	
<del>But they know not the thoughts of the LORD,</del> <del>neither understand they his counsel:</del> <del>for</del> he shall gather them as <del>the</del> sheaves into the floor. <del>Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion:</del>	<b>And I will gather my people together</b> as <b>a man gathereth his</b> sheaves into the floor. <b>For I will make my people with whom the</b> <b>Father hath covenanted,</b> <b>yea,</b> I will make thy horn iron, and I will make thy hoofs brass. And thou shalt beat in pieces many people; and I will consecrate their gain unto the Lord,
<del>for</del> I will make thine horn iron, and I will make thy hoofs brass: and thou shalt beat in pieces many people: and I will consecrate their gain unto the LORD,	

and their substance unto the Lord of the whole earth.

and their substance unto the Lord of the whole earth.

**And behold, I am he which doeth it.**

Why does Jesus quote Micah here, rather than Isaiah? I suspect part of the reason is that the book of Isaiah does not have a place where it makes the point Jesus wants to make: in the last days, the remnant itself will be empowered by God to directly overthrow their wicked Gentile oppressors. In the remnant stories found in Isaiah, God does the overthrowing Himself (sending the angel to stop the Assyrian army, see Isaiah 1–39) or uses another Gentile nation (the Persians conquering Babylon, see Isaiah 40–66), and in both cases the remnant is passive. Micah, by contrast, contains multiple passages describing the remnant itself being the agent of destruction, which makes Micah more useful than Isaiah regarding this particular moment in Israel’s latter-day story.

### **Jesus Quotes Acts 3:22–26 and Explains the Covenant of the Father (3 Nephi 20:21–29)**

Jesus next indicates that He will be in the midst of Lehi’s descendants in a place called New Jerusalem. To emphasize His role in leading the Lehites at that day, Jesus quotes a prophecy given by Moses in Deuteronomy 18:15, 19, as well as a description of the Abrahamic covenant in Genesis 22:18. These passages are also quoted by Peter in Acts 3:22–26, and it is clear that 3 Nephi 20:23–26 is following the rendering of these Old Testament passages as phrased in the King James Version of the book of Acts, particularly since Peter’s lines surrounding the Old Testament quotations also appear here in 3 Nephi (see the comparison below; I have added quotation marks to help you see where the Old Testament quotations start and stop). This is curious because at the time Jesus gave this sermon, the book of Acts had yet to be written. Either an omniscient Jesus is giving this teaching in the form of a yet-to-be-written book of Acts, or the English translation of this section of 3 Nephi is following Acts to communicate these points. Either way, note that Jesus’s statement differs from Peter’s in significant and contextually appropriate ways.

ACTS 3:22–26 (KING JAMES VERSION)	JESUS IN 3 NEPHI 20:23–26
<p><del>For</del> Moses <del>truly</del> said <del>unto the fathers</del>, “A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you” [Deuteronomy 18:15]. “And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be <del>destroyed</del> from among the people” [Deuteronomy 18:19]. Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have <del>likewise foretold of these days</del>. Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which <del>God</del> made with <del>our</del> fathers, saying unto Abraham, “And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed” [Genesis 22:18]. Unto you first <del>God</del>, having raised up <del>his</del></p>	<p><b>Behold, I am he of whom</b> Moses <b>spake</b>, saying: “A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you” [Deuteronomy 18:15]. “And it shall come to pass that every soul which will not hear that prophet shall be <b>cut off</b> from among the people” [Deuteronomy 18:19]. <b>Verily I say unto you</b>, yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have <b>testified of me</b>. <b>And behold</b>, ye are the children of the prophets; <b>and ye are of the house of Israel</b>; and <b>ye are</b> of the covenant which <b>the Father</b> made with <b>your</b> fathers, saying unto Abraham: “And in thy seed shall all the kindreds</p>

~~Son Jesus~~, sent ~~him~~ to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.

of the earth be blessed” [Genesis 22:18]. **The Father** having raised **me** up unto you first, **and** sent **me** to bless you in turning away every one of you from his iniquities; **and this because ye are the children of the covenant—**

Jesus had explained in v. 26 that He was visiting the Lehtes “first” (before the Gentiles) to turn them from iniquity because they (the Lehtes) are of the house of Israel. However, He then explains that *after* the people of the house of Israel are blessed, God will next bless the Gentiles—reiterating again that this helps fulfill the promise to Abraham that “all the kindreds of the earth [will] be blessed,” as first promised in Genesis. The power given to the Gentiles will enable them to scatter the rebellious people of the house of Israel across the earth, including scourging the descendants of Lehi in “this land.” Nevertheless, Jesus warns that if the Gentiles harden their hearts after the fulness of the gospel is restored to them in the last days, they will really regret it. God will once again remember the house of Israel and will once again empower *them*, enabling them to gather to the land of Jerusalem.

Putting together what Jesus has taught so far, notice that during His mortal ministry and during His immediate post-resurrection visits, Jesus says His mission is to visit and preach to members of the house of Israel—here meaning literal descendants of Abraham, such as the Lehtes in the New World. After that, He will direct His gospel to go to the Gentiles, that is, people who were not descendants of Abraham. Eventually people from both backgrounds will both rebel and fall into apostasy. Because the people of the house of Israel had rejected the covenant that was their ancestral obligation to embrace, when the time comes to restore the fulness of the gospel once again, the Lord’s latter-day work will begin among *Gentiles*, who will then bring gospel blessings to the attention of Israel. Centuries before Christ, an angel speaking to Nephi had described this reversal with a memorable phrase: “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 13:42).

### **Jesus Quotes Isaiah 52:8–10, 1–3, 6–7, 11–15: The Restoration of Zion; God’s Servant to Suffer and Be Exalted (3 Nephi 20:30–46)**

Jesus goes on to elaborate that when the house of Israel receives the fulness of the gospel and believes that He is the Son of God, then the prophecy in Isaiah 52:8–10 will be fulfilled:

ISAIAH 52:8–10 (KING JAMES VERSION)	JESUS IN 3 NEPHI 20:32–35
<del>Thy</del> watchmen shall lift up <del>the</del> voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, <del>when the LORD shall bring again Zion.</del>	<b>Then</b> shall <b>their</b> watchmen lift up <b>their</b> voice, <b>and</b> with the voice together shall they sing; for they shall see eye to eye. <b>Then will the Father gather them together again,</b> <b>and give unto them Jerusalem for the land of</b> <b>their inheritance.</b>
Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem:	<b>Then shall they</b> break forth into joy— Sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem;

for the ~~LORD~~ hath comforted his people,  
 he hath redeemed Jerusalem.  
 The ~~LORD~~ hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes  
 of all the nations;  
 and all the ends of the earth shall see the  
 salvation of ~~our God~~.

for the **Father** hath comforted his people,  
 he hath redeemed Jerusalem.  
 The **Father** hath made bare his holy arm in the  
 eyes of all the nations;  
 and all the ends of the earth shall see the  
 salvation of **the Father**;  
**and the Father and I are one.**

Two important things to note about this quotation: First, notice that Jesus had already quoted Isaiah 52:8–10 during his first-day sermon (3 Nephi 16:18–20). However, when he quoted it the first time, He didn’t adapt it at all—it reads just as found in the book of Isaiah. Now, however, He is quoting the same prophecy with significant emendations and textual expansions. Jesus did not feel bound by the precise wording of prophecies, but felt free to modify them so that they would more easily fit new settings.

Second, notice that in addition to quoting the prophecy differently the second time, Jesus is using the same prophecy to make a slightly different point. In 3 Nephi 16:18–20, Jesus used Isaiah’s prophecy as an illustration that the Lehtes’ descendants would once day joyfully receive their ancestral lands for their inheritance (see 3 Nephi 16:16–17). Here in 3 Nephi 20:32–35, Jesus uses Isaiah’s prophecy as an illustration that the Jews/house of Israel more generally would one day joyfully receive Jerusalem for their inheritance (see vv. 29–31). Keep in mind that *neither* of these interpretations is the original, contextual meaning of Isaiah 52:8–10; in both cases, Jesus is *likening* the original prophecy to fit new historical circumstances.

After giving His modified version of Isaiah 52:8–10, Jesus breaks slightly from His Isaiah quotes to say, “And then shall be brought to pass that which is written ...” (3 Nephi 20:36a). He then proceeds to quote from other passages in Isaiah chapter 52, first verses 1–3, then, verses 6–7, and finally verses 11–15:

ISAIAH 52:1–3 (KING JAMES VERSION)	JESUS IN 3 NEPHI 20:36–45
Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion;  put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean. Shake thyself from the dust; arise, <del>and</del> sit down, O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion. For thus saith the LORD, Ye have sold yourselves for nought; and ye shall be redeemed without money.	Awake, awake <b>again, and</b> put on thy strength, O Zion;  put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city, for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean. Shake thyself from the dust; arise, sit down, O Jerusalem; loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion. For thus saith the Lord: Ye have sold yourselves for naught, and ye shall be redeemed without money.
ISAIAH 52:6–7 (KING JAMES VERSION)	
<del>Therefore</del> my people shall know my name:	<b>Verily, verily, I say unto you, that</b> my people shall know my name;



~~therefore~~ they shall know in that day that I am he  
that doth speak:  
~~behold, it is I.~~

How beautiful upon the mountains  
are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings,

that publisheth peace;  
that bringeth good tidings of good,  
that publisheth salvation;  
that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!

ISAIAH 52:11–15 (KING JAMES VERSION)

Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence,  
touch ~~no~~ unclean ~~thing~~;  
go ye out of the midst of her;  
be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the LORD.  
For ye shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight:  
for the LORD will go before you;  
and the God of Israel will be your rearward.  
Behold, my servant shall deal prudently,  
he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very  
high.

As many were astonished at thee;  
his visage was so marred  
more than any man,  
and his form more than the sons of men:  
So shall he sprinkle many nations;  
the kings shall shut their mouths at him:  
for that which had not been told them shall they  
see;  
and that which they had not heard shall they  
consider.

**yea**, in that day they shall know that I am he that  
doth speak.

**And then shall they say:**

How beautiful upon the mountains  
are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings **unto**  
**them**,

that publisheth peace;  
that bringeth good tidings **unto them** of good,  
that publisheth salvation;  
that saith unto Zion: Thy God reigneth!

**And then shall a cry go forth:**

Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence,  
touch **not that which is** unclean;  
go ye out of the midst of her;  
be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord.  
For ye shall not go out with haste nor go by flight;  
for the Lord will go before you,  
and the God of Israel shall be your rearward.  
Behold, my servant shall deal prudently;  
he shall be exalted and extolled and be very high.

As many were astonished at thee—  
his visage was so marred,  
more than any man,  
and his form more than the sons of men—  
So shall he sprinkle many nations;  
the kings shall shut their mouths at him,  
for that which had not been told them shall they  
see;  
and that which they had not heard shall they  
consider.

The original context for these verses, as you know, is the return of the Jews to rebuild Jerusalem after the Babylonian exile in the sixth century BC. They were “captive” after they had “sold [them]selves” into wickedness, but now messengers come rushing to Jerusalem to bring the “good tidings” that Jehovah still “reigneth” over His people even though things had looked hopeless. Those that had been exiled will now “depart” from Babylon to return home to Jerusalem, the land of their inheritance. Once again, Jesus is applying these descriptions to a new historical setting, the gathering of Israel in the latter days. “Then shall this covenant which the Father hath covenanted with his people be fulfilled,” Jesus concludes, “and then shall Jerusalem be inhabited again with my people, and it shall be the land of their inheritance” (3 Nephi 20:46).

One interesting feature of the last three verses in this quotation is the “servant.” This figure will at one point be so injured as to be shocking, but will eventually be “exalted and extolled.” The transformation will be so great that nations will be willing to consider that which they would not have before. Who is this servant? This passage comes from the last of the “servant songs” in

Isaiah, and as you know, Christians have identified the servant as several individuals or groups. Whatever the original meaning of Isaiah 52:13–15, we cannot be sure if Jesus in 3 Nephi 20:43–45 is even using the original meaning or if He’s likening to a new setting again. Because Jesus seems to indicate (3 Nephi 20:46 and 21:7–10) that this prophecy will be fulfilled in the future, Latter-day Saint commentators have understood the servant prophecy of 3 Nephi 20:43–45 as several different individuals, including Jesus Christ or Joseph Smith or another latter-day prophet—or possibly not a person at all.

6. Jesus quotes Isaiah 52:13–15, which speaks of a “servant” who will be “marred” but later “extolled” (see 3 Nephi 20:43–45). This could be understood as a person in the latter days, such as Jesus Himself or the Prophet Joseph Smith. However, Jesus repeats Isaiah 52:15 in 3 Nephi 21:8, and in light of what Jesus talks about *in between* 20:45 and 21:8, several scholars have suggested the “servant” is not a person at all. Watch the short video at <https://knowhy.bookofmormoncentral.org/knowhy/who-is-the-servant-spoken-of-by-christ>. According to this interpretation, what functions as God’s latter-day “servant”?

### **The Book of Mormon Will Be a Sign for the Gathering of Israel (an interpretation of Isaiah 52:13–15) (3 Nephi 21:1–11)**

As we move from 3 Nephi 20 to 21, Jesus shifts from *what* will happen to *when* it will happen. When will all this stuff about the fulness of the gospel coming forth and the gathering of Israel from all over the earth take place? The answer is in 3 Nephi 21:1–7, but you have to read carefully because all seven verses are *a single super-long sentence*, with tangents abounding in every direction. If you chop out all the asides, though, you get this: “And behold, this is the thing which I will give unto you for a sign—for verily I say unto you that when these things which I declare unto you [the Lehtes] ... shall be made known unto the Gentiles ... and shall come forth ... from them [the Gentiles] unto you [the Lehtes] ... it shall be a sign unto them [the Gentiles], that they may know that the work of the Father hath already commenced unto the fulfilling of the covenant which he hath made unto the people who are of the house of Israel.” In other words, the coming forth of the Book of Mormon is a sign about the timing, indicating that the work of gathering Israel has already begun.

In vv. 8–11 Jesus continues by alluding to snippets of the servant prophecy from Isaiah 52:13–15, which he had quoted in full back in 3 Nephi 20:43–45. This servant will have a role to play in the “great and marvelous work” taking place.

### **Jesus Quotes Micah 5:8–15: God Will Fight Alongside a Remnant of Jacob (3 Nephi 21:12–21)**

Jesus then proceeds with a warning for anyone who will not believe His words as found in the Book of Mormon: “it shall be done even as Moses said[:] they shall be cut off from among my

people who are of the covenant” (3 Nephi 21:11). This is a reference to Deuteronomy 18:19, which Jesus had already cited back in 3 Nephi 20:23. Because the Book of Mormon is the primary manifestation of God’s work in the last days, no one can become part of the covenant people, or stay as part of the covenant people, who does not accept it. To illustrate this idea, Jesus then quotes Micah 5:8–15:

MICAH 5:8–15 (KING JAMES VERSION)	JESUS IN 3 NEPHI 21:12–21
<p>And <del>the</del> remnant of Jacob shall be among the Gentiles  in the midst of <del>many people</del> as a lion among the beasts of the forest,  as a young lion among the flocks of sheep:  who, if he go through, both treadeth down, and teareth in pieces,  and none can deliver.  <del>Thine</del> hand shall be lifted up upon <del>thine</del> adversaries,  and all <del>thine</del> enemies shall be cut off.</p> <p>And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the <del>LORD</del>,  that I will cut off thy horses out of the midst of thee,  and I will destroy thy chariots:  And I will cut off the cities of thy land,  and throw down all thy strong holds:  And I will cut off witchcrafts out of thine hand;  and thou shalt have no more soothsayers:  Thy graven images also will I cut off,  and thy standing images out of the midst of thee;  and thou shalt no more worship the work of thine hands.  And I will pluck up thy groves out of the midst of thee:  so will I destroy thy cities.</p> <p>And I will execute vengeance <del>in anger</del> and fury upon the heathen,  such as they have not heard.</p>	<p>And <b>my people who are a</b> remnant of Jacob shall be among the Gentiles,  <b>yea</b>, in the midst of <b>them</b> as a lion among the beasts of the forest,  as a young lion among the flocks of sheep,  who, if he go through both treadeth down and teareth in pieces,  and none can deliver.  <b>Their</b> hand shall be lifted up upon <b>their</b> adversaries,  and all <b>their</b> enemies shall be cut off.  <b>Yea, wo be unto the Gentiles except they repent;</b>  <b>for</b> it shall come to pass in that day, saith the <b>Father</b>,  that I will cut off thy horses out of the midst of thee,  and I will destroy thy chariots;  And I will cut off the cities of thy land,  and throw down all thy strongholds;  And I will cut off witchcrafts out of thy hand,  and thou shalt have no more soothsayers;  Thy graven images I will also cut off,  and thy standing images out of the midst of thee,  and thou shalt no more worship the works of thy hands;  And I will pluck up thy groves out of the midst of thee;  so will I destroy thy cities.  <b>And it shall come to pass that all lyings, and deceivings, and envyings, and strifes, and priestcrafts, and whoredoms, shall be done away.</b>  <b>For it shall come to pass, saith the Father, that at that day whosoever will not repent and come unto my Beloved Son, them will I cut off from among my people, O house of Israel;</b>  And I will execute vengeance and fury upon <b>them</b>,  <b>even as upon</b> the heathen,  such as they have not heard.</p>

As with all these prophecies, you don't need to get too frustrated with individual images as long as you can follow the big picture. Jesus introduced this adapted Micah prophecy by warning that those who do not accept the Book of Mormon will be "cut off from among my people who are of the covenant." The Micah passage then gives that idea poetic expression. The righteous of the house of Israel will have power to "tread down" the unbelieving Gentiles, who will find that their previous might has been stripped from them. God and His people will go through destroying wickedness of all kinds. By that point, God says, *anyone*, Israelite or Gentile, who "will not repent and come unto my Beloved Son," will be "cut off from among my people [of the] house of Israel," echoing the warning from Moses cited right before the Micah passage.

Two more quick points about Jesus's use of Micah here. First, we have an example here once again of Jesus quoting a prophecy He already quoted earlier—Micah 5:8–9 was quoted already back in 3 Nephi 20:16–17. And once again, Jesus has quoted the repeated prophecy using different words than He did the first time, indicating that He didn't feel bound by one particular text. Second, this repeated prophecy also gives us another example of Jesus quoting the same prophecy with two different meanings. Back in 3 Nephi 20:16–17, Jesus had quoted Micah to tell the Lehites how their descendants would one day tread down their Gentiles oppressors with power. Here in 3 Nephi 21:12–13, Jesus makes the same prophecy more generalized by describing how the house of Israel will tread down once-powerful Gentiles, and that eventually anyone, Israelite or Gentile, who will not follow Christ will be cut off. Jesus's use of Micah 5:8–9 is thus another example of how prophecy can be adapted so that it is "fulfilled" in multiple ways.

### **Righteous Gentiles in the Latter Days (3 Nephi 21:22–29)**

We've been reading about the destruction of the unrighteous (treading and tearing to pieces and getting cut off and all that), but at this point Jesus switches to the *blessings* that will come to those who are loyal to the restored covenant. Jesus explains that Gentiles who repent can join Christ's church that will be established among them, and they will be numbered with those of the house of Israel. At some point, a combination of Lehiite descendants, Gentiles who have been adopted into the house of Israel, and "as many of the house of Israel as shall come," will work together to build a city called New Jerusalem (alluded to earlier in 3 Nephi 20:22).

#### **7. In the last days, what will Jesus "establish ... among" the Gentiles?**

In 3 Nephi 21:26, Jesus turns again to the *timing* of these events. He had earlier explained that that when the Book of Mormon comes forth to the Gentiles and through the Gentiles returns to Lehi's descendants, that would be a sign that the gathering of Israel "hath already commenced" (see 3 Nephi 21:1–7)—indeed, since the Book of Mormon is *the* instrument propelling that gathering, the gathering could not have begun any sooner than the Book of Mormon's

appearance. Now, at the end of chapter 21, Jesus indicates again that at the time “when this gospel shall be preached among the remnant of this people [the Lehiite descendants in the last days],” that is the time when people will know that the “work of the Father” has “commence[d].” In fact, Jesus elaborates, this work will begin not just for Lehi’s descendants but for *all* the remnants of Israel—all the Israelite groups “which the Father hath led away out of Jerusalem” over the course of history. Jesus indicates twice that this work will happen among “all nations,” a phrase linking His description with the assignment given to Abraham’s posterity that through them would “*all the nations* of the earth be blessed” (Genesis 22:18). As these people return to their physical and/or spiritual “home,” Jesus once again quotes Isaiah 52:12 (cited previously in 3 Nephi 20:42):

ISAIAH 52:12 (KING JAMES VERSION)	JESUS IN 3 NEPHI 21:29
<del>For</del> ye shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight: for <del>the LORD</del> will go before <del>you</del> ; and <del>the God of Israel</del> will be <del>your</del> rearward.	<b>and they</b> shall not go out in haste, nor go by flight, for <b>I</b> will go before <b>them</b> , <b>saith the Father</b> , and <b>I</b> will be <b>their</b> rearward.

Jesus is using this line from Isaiah to say that during this gathering people will not go hastily like powerless refugees, but will be lead (at the front) and protected (at the back) by God—this will be an orderly, victorious procession.

Regarding the text of this quotation, note that while Jesus is using Isaiah 52:12 here in the same *interpretive sense* that He used it back in 3 Nephi 20:42, He does change the *wording*: whereas 3 Nephi 20:42 read the same as the original Isaiah prophecy, here Jesus adapts both the speaker (Isaiah to the Father) and the audience (second-person address to third person). As we have seen several times, Jesus felt free to modify the words of prophecy as He saw fit.

### Jesus Quotes Isaiah 54:1–17: Reassurances to Israel and a Promise of Restoration (3 Nephi 22:1–17)

Continuing the subject of how wonderful and amazing things will be at this future day, Jesus next says, “And then shall that which is written come to pass ...,” followed by a recital of all of Isaiah chapter 54.

ISAIAH 54:1–17 (KING JAMES VERSION)	JESUS IN 3 NEPHI 22:1–17
Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the LORD. Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations:	Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child; for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord. Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thy habitations;

spare not,  
 lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes;  
 For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on  
 the left;  
 and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles,  
 and make the desolate cities to be inhabited.  
 Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed:  
 neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt not be  
 put to shame:  
 for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth,  
 and shalt not remember the reproach of thy  
 widowhood any more.  
 For thy Maker is thine husband;  
 the LORD of hosts is his name;  
 and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel;  
 The God of the whole earth shall he be called.  
 For the LORD hath called thee as a woman forsaken  
 and grieved in spirit,  
 and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused,  
 saith thy God.  
 For a small moment have I forsaken thee;  
 but with great mercies will I gather thee.  
 In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a  
 moment;  
 but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy  
 on thee,  
 saith the LORD thy Redeemer.  
 For this ~~is as~~ the waters of Noah unto me:  
 for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should  
 no more go over the earth;  
 so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with  
 thee, ~~nor rebuke thee~~.  
 For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be  
 removed;  
 but my kindness shall not depart from thee,  
 neither shall the covenant of my peace be  
 removed,  
 saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee.  
 O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not  
 comforted,  
 behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours,  
 and lay thy foundations with sapphires.  
 And I will make thy windows of agates,  
 and thy gates of carbuncles,  
 and all thy borders of pleasant stones.  
 And all thy children shall be taught of the LORD;  
 and great shall be the peace of thy children.  
 In righteousness shalt thou be established:  
 thou shalt be far from oppression; for thou shalt  
 not fear:  
 and from terror; for it shall not come near thee.

spare not,  
 lengthen thy cords and strengthen thy stakes;  
 For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on  
 the left,  
 and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles  
 and make the desolate cities to be inhabited.  
 Fear not, for thou shalt not be ashamed;  
 neither be thou confounded, for thou shalt not be  
 put to shame;  
 for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth,  
 and shalt not remember the reproach of thy  
 widowhood any more.  
 For thy maker, thy husband,  
 the Lord of Hosts is his name;  
 and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel—  
 the God of the whole earth shall he be called.  
 For the Lord hath called thee as a woman forsaken  
 and grieved in spirit,  
 and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused,  
 saith thy God.  
 For a small moment have I forsaken thee,  
 but with great mercies will I gather thee.  
 In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a  
 moment,  
 but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy  
 on thee,  
 saith the Lord thy Redeemer.  
 For this, the waters of Noah unto me,  
 for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should  
 no more go over the earth,  
 so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with  
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 For the mountains shall depart and the hills be  
 removed,  
 but my kindness shall not depart from thee,  
 neither shall the covenant of my peace be  
 removed,  
 saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.  
 O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not  
 comforted!  
 Behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colors,  
 and lay thy foundations with sapphires.  
 And I will make thy windows of agates,  
 and thy gates of carbuncles,  
 and all thy borders of pleasant stones.  
 And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord;  
 and great shall be the peace of thy children.  
 In righteousness shalt thou be established;  
 thou shalt be far from oppression for thou shalt  
 not fear,  
 and from terror for it shall not come near thee.

Behold, they shall surely gather together, ~~but~~ not by me;  
 whosoever shall gather together against thee shall fall for thy sake.  
 Behold, I have created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire,  
 and that bringeth forth an instrument for his work;  
 and I have created the waster to destroy.  
 No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper;  
 and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn.  
 This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD,  
 and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD.

Behold, they shall surely gather together **against thee**, not by me;  
 whosoever shall gather together against thee shall fall for thy sake.  
 Behold, I have created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire,  
 and that bringeth forth an instrument for his work;  
 and I have created the waster to destroy.  
 No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper;  
 and every tongue that shall revile against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn.  
 This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord,  
 and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord.

With the exception of a couple minor differences, Jesus’s quotation matches the original Isaiah text. This is a really happy chapter, the perfect text for Jesus to illustrate how great things will be for the righteous when God gathers His covenant people, destroys their enemies, and ushers in an era of peace. The text frequently acknowledges that people have had a really hard time prior to this, but through a variety of images it contrasts their previously difficult circumstances with the blessings now being poured out. For “the servants of the Lord” who have endured to this point, these blessings are “the heritage” they can look forward to after their tribulations.

### **Jesus on the Words of Isaiah (3 Nephi 23:1–5)**

As Jesus concludes His teachings on the covenant, He brings everything full circle by repeating two items of instruction for the Lehites. First, He endorses the prophecies of Isaiah (“all things that he spake have been and shall be”) and exhorts His listeners to study Isaiah’s words (“search these things diligently”). This echoes what He said as He began His second-day discourse (“the words of Isaiah should be fulfilled ... therefore search them,” 3 Nephi 20:11). Second, Jesus commands the Lehites to “write the things which I have told you,” because these words will play a crucial role in the last days when “they shall go forth unto the Gentiles.” This echoes what He said as He began to speak on the subject of the house of Israel back in His first-day discourse (“I command you that ye shall write these sayings ... that these sayings which ye shall write shall be kept and shall be manifested unto the Gentiles,” 3 Nephi 16:4).

8. As He concludes His house of Israel discourse, what does Jesus tell the Lehites to diligently study?