

## LESSON 21

# The Coming of Jesus Christ

### Introduction

The conditions and events associated with Jesus Christ's visit to the Americas serve as a pattern for His Second Coming. This lesson will help students apply principles from the Book

of Mormon to be better prepared for the "great and dreadful day" (3 Nephi 25:5) when Christ will come again.

### Background Reading

- Dallin H. Oaks, "Preparation for the Second Coming," *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2004, 7–10.
- Jeffrey R. Holland, "Preparing for the Second Coming," *New Era*, Dec. 2013, 2–5.

### Suggestions for Teaching

**Helaman 14:20–30; 16:1–5; 3 Nephi 9:1–5, 12–14; 10:12**

*Signs are given to help us believe and prepare for the Lord's Second Coming*

Invite students to share examples of events or activities in their lives that have required preparation (for example, a mission). Then ask:

- What difference did your preparation make in your overall experience?
- How do you think the experience would have been different if you had not prepared?

Display the following statement by President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994), and invite a student to read it aloud. Ask the class to listen for what President Benson taught that the Book of Mormon can help us prepare for:



"In the Book of Mormon we find a pattern for preparing for the Second Coming. A major portion of the book centers on the few decades just prior to Christ's coming to America. By careful study of that time period, we can determine why some were destroyed in the terrible judgments that preceded His coming and what brought others to stand at the temple in the land of Bountiful and thrust their hands into the wounds of His hands and feet" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Ezra Taft Benson* [2014], 140).

- According to President Benson, why should we carefully study the Book of Mormon account of the visit of Jesus Christ to His people in the Americas? (Make sure that students understand that by studying the Book of Mormon account of the events surrounding Jesus Christ's visit to the Americas, we can learn a pattern for preparing for the Second Coming.)

Invite students to look for principles and doctrines as they study the account of the Savior's visit to the Americas that will help them to prepare for the Second Coming.

Remind students that prior to the Savior’s birth, Samuel the Lamanite foretold the signs that would accompany the Savior’s birth and death. Ask students to scan Helaman 14:20–27 and identify the signs of Christ’s death.

- What are some of the signs that Samuel told the Nephites would accompany Jesus Christ’s death?

Assign half of the students to read Helaman 14:28–30 while the other half read Helaman 16:4–5. Ask them to look for reasons these signs would be given to the Nephites. You might encourage students to pay particular attention to instances of the phrase “to the intent that ...”

- According to these verses, why does the Lord give signs? (Help students identify the following doctrine: **The Lord provides signs and wonders so that we might believe in Him and be saved.** Consider writing this doctrine on the board.)
- What does Helaman 14:29 indicate will happen to those who do not believe in the signs and wonders? (A righteous judgment will come upon them.)

Explain that in the account found in 3 Nephi, the promised signs and wonders—including the destruction foretelling the Savior’s death—began to be fulfilled. Ask a few students to take turns reading aloud from 3 Nephi 9:1–5, 12–14; 10:12 as the class looks for what happened to those who believed in the messages of Samuel and Nephi as well as what happened to those who did not.

- According to these verses, why were some of the people destroyed? Why were some spared?

Point out that followers of Jesus Christ today have been taught to watch for the signs that will precede His Second Coming. Ask students to discuss how understanding and recognizing the signs of the Second Coming, which the prophets have foretold, can help Church members today be better prepared for His coming.

### 3 Nephi 11:1–17

#### *Preparing to meet the Savior*

Display an image of Jesus Christ appearing to the Nephites. As students review the account of the Savior’s visit to the Nephites, encourage them to look for the blessings received by those who believed in the signs of the Lord’s death and prepared for His coming.

Invite several students to take turns reading from 3 Nephi 11:1–12 aloud.

- How did belief in the promised signs of the Lord’s coming prepare people for this experience?
- In what way can these verses remind us of our own need to prepare?

Invite students to take turns reading 3 Nephi 11:13–17 aloud and imagine how it might have felt to be present on that occasion.

- How might this experience represent what the Lord Jesus Christ desires for each of us? (Answers should reflect the following truth: **Jesus Christ invites all**

**to come unto Him and to receive a testimony that He is the God of the whole earth.)**

- In what ways might these events be similar to what will happen at Jesus’s Second Coming?
- What might you do to follow the Savior’s invitation so that you will be prepared to stand before Him someday?

Conclude by displaying the following statement by Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:



“What if the day of His coming were tomorrow? If we knew that we would meet the Lord tomorrow—through our premature death or through His unexpected coming—what would we do today? What confessions would we make? What practices would we discontinue? What accounts would we settle? What forgivenesses would we extend? What testimonies would we bear?

“If we would do those things then, why not now? Why not seek peace while peace can be obtained?” (“Preparation for the Second Coming,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2004, 9).

- Why is it important to prepare ourselves as if the Lord’s coming were tomorrow?

Invite students to seek and respond to the promptings of the Spirit as they prepare to meet the Lord.

### Student Readings

- Helaman 14:20–30; 16:1–5; 3 Nephi 9:1–5, 12–14; 10:12; 11:1–17.
- Dallin H. Oaks, “Preparation for the Second Coming,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2004, 7–10.