1 Nephi 13:1-3

**Gentiles**

Various meanings have been attached to the name Gentiles in different ages, depending on the historical setting or the doctrinal teachings involved. Literally the meaning is, “of the same clan or race,” and Biblical revisions frequently substitute the word nations in its place.

The descendants of Noah’s son Japheth were called Gentiles (Gen. 10:1-5), and in this sense the descendants of Shem…and of Ham…would not be Gentiles. In the days of Abraham, the term was used to refer to those nations and peoples who had not descended from him, with the added assurance that all Gentiles who should receive the gospel would be adopted into the lineage of Abraham and be accounted his seed. (Abra. 2:9-11.) The Prophet taught that those so adopted became literally of the blood of Abraham. (Teachings, pp. 149-150.) In the days of ancient Israel, those not of the lineage of Jacob were considered to be Gentiles, although the Arabs and other races of Semitic origin who traced their lineage back to Abraham would not have been Gentiles in the strict Abrahamic use of the word.

After the Kingdom of Israel was destroyed and the Ten Tribes were led away into Assyrian captivity, those of the Kingdom of Judah called themselves Jews and designated all others as Gentiles. It is this concept that would have been taught to Lehi, Mulek and the other Jews who came to the Western Hemisphere to found the great Nephite and Lamanite civilizations. It is not surprising, therefore, to find the Book of Mormon repeatedly speaking of Jew and Gentile as though this phrase marked a division between all men; to find the United States described as a Gentile Nation (1 Ne. 13; 3 Ne. 21); and to find the promise that the Book of Mormon would come forth “by way of the Gentile.” (Title page of the Book of Mormon; D&C 20:9.)

McConkie, Mormon Doctrine, pp. 310-11

1 Nephi 13:4-9

We should emphasize at this point that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has not officially identified the great and abominable church. We are left to our own supposition and conclusion. If a person identifies it as one church in Europe, that is his personal opinion. If another person identifies it as all churches in Europe and Asia Minor except the true, restored church, that is his opinion. And if another wishes to define it as all organizations in Europe, Asia Minor, and the Middle East through which the devil operated, that is his opinion. The scriptures are before us to study, but in the absence of an official declaration from the Church, our conclusions remain our private views and should not be taught as Church doctrine.

As one studies chapter 13, one should be more concerned with what the great and abominable church did than with who or what the great and abominable church was.

Robert Parsons, The Great and Abominable Church, p. 4

The titles church of the devil and great and abominable church are used to identify all churches or organizations…which are designed to take men on a course that leads away from God.

Bruce R. McConkie, Mormon Doctrine, 137

1 Nephi 13:7-9

**Priestcraft**

Priestcrafts are that men preach and set themselves up for a light unto the world, that they may get gain and praise of the world.

2 Nephi 26:29
1 Nephi 13:10
The Spirit of God inspired the great Columbus…to cross the many waters, the great Atlantic ocean, which separated him from the seed of Nephi’s brethren.
Rulon S. Wells, in Conference Report, October 1919, 206

1 Nephi 13:12
It was Christopher Columbus whom he saw, and he observed further that the discoverer was guided by divine power on his journey.

Go to any public library, read almost any detailed biography of the discoverer, and it becomes immediately clear that he felt himself an inspired man, sent of heaven to make the voyage. For example, Christopher, Don Quixote of the Seas, written in German by Jacob Wassermann and translated into English by Eric Sutton, tells the story very well:

"From my first youth onward, I was a seaman and have so continued until this day….Wherever on the earth a ship has been, I have been. I have spoken and treated with learned men, priests, and laymen, Latins and Greeks, Jews and Moors, and with many men of other faiths. The Lord was well disposed to my desire, and He bestowed upon me courage and understanding; knowledge of seafaring He gave me in abundance, of astrology as much as was needed, and of geometry and astronomy likewise. Further, He gave me joy and cunning in drawing maps and thereon cities, mountains, rivers, islands, and harbors, each one in its place. I have seen and truly I have studied all books—cosmographies, which our Lord unlocked my mind, sent me upon the sea, and gave me fire for the deed. Those who heard of my enterprise called it foolish, mocked me, and laughed. But who can doubt that the Holy Ghost inspired me?"
Mark E. Peterson, The Great Prologue, pp. 3, 26

Elder Orson Hyde of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught that Moroni’s grand ministry involves watching over America. He referred to Moroni as the “Prince of America” and said that he “presides over the destinies of America, and feels a lively interest in all our doings” (JD, 6:368). Elder Hyde further stated that Moroni helped guide Christopher Columbus through dreams and visions, was in the camp of George Washington directing affairs by an invisible hand, and led our founding fathers on to victory, "and all this to open and prepare the way for the Church and kingdom of God to be established on the western hemisphere, for the redemption of Israel and the salvation of the world" (JD, 6:368).
Cowan, Encyclopedia of Latter-Day Saint History, “Moroni”

In those early and perilous times, our men were few, and our resources limited. Poverty was among the most potent enemies we had to encounter; yet our arms were successful; and it may not be amiss to ask here, by whose power victory so often perched on our banner? It was by the agency of that same angel of God that appeared unto Joseph Smith, and revealed to him the history of the early inhabitants of this country, whose mounds, bones, and remains of towns, cities, and fortifications speak from the dust in the ears of the living with the voice of undeniable truth. This same angel presides over the destinies of America, and feels a lively interest in all our doings. He was in the camp of Washington; and, by an invisible hand, led on our fathers to conquest and victory; and all this to open and prepare the way for the Church and kingdom of God to be established on the western hemisphere, for the redemption of Israel and the salvation of the world.

This same angel was with Columbus, and gave him deep impressions, by dreams and by visions, respecting this New World. Trammelled by poverty and by an unpopular cause, yet his persevering and unyielding heart would not allow an obstacle in his way too great for him to overcome; and the angel of God helped him—was with him on the stormy deep, calmed the troubled elements, and guided his frail vessel to the desired haven. Under the
guardianship of this same angel, or Prince of America, have the United States grown, increased and flourished like
the sturdy oak by the rivers of water.

1 Nephi 13:13

It was the Lord that inspired that little band of people [Pilgrims] who crossed the mighty ocean and landed at
Plymouth rock, because they desired to worship him according to the dictates of their own conscience. He watched
over them and safeguarded their descendants and those who followed them to America, and in due time, there came
an opportunity to establish liberty such as humankind had not known before.
George Albert Smith, Conference Report, Oct. 1922, pp. 95-96

1 Nephi 13:14-15

…you will shine brightly, fired by the strength of the God who brought you to this Land and for some special
purpose gave you dominion over this Land and over the red man. That destiny is a mystery to us, for we do not
understand when the buffalo are all slaughtered, the wild horses are tamed, the secret corners of the forest heavy
with scent of many men, and the view of the ripe hills blotted by talking wires. Where is the thicket? Gone. Where is
the eagle? Gone. The end of living and the beginning of survival.
Chief Seattle’s reply to the President’s request for a large area of Indian land in 1854

1 Nephi 13:16

[President Benson quoting Wilford Woodruff] “I am going to bear my testimony to this assembly, if I never do it
again in my life, that those men who laid the foundation of this American Government…were the best spirits the God
of Heaven could find on the face of the earth. They were choice spirits, not wicked men. General Washington and
all the men that labored for the purpose were inspired of the Lord” (Journal of Discourses, Sept. 16, 1898, p. 89).
[Pres. Benson then added his own testimony] Yes, our nation’s foundation is spiritual. Without spirituality, we are no
better than any of the other nations which have sunk into oblivion.
Ezra Taft Benson, Righteousness Exalteth a Nation, p. 4

1 Nephi 13:17-19

It is an interesting thing that Washington, during the progress of the revolutionary War and more particularly at
the close of the Revolutionary War, expressed himself repeatedly to the effect that the American armies by
themselves were altogether too weak to bring about this independence they now had achieved—but that
independence came as a gift of God to these American colonies.
Mark E. Peterson, BYU Speeches of the Year, Feb. 20, 1968

1 Nephi 13:23-29

The Prophet Joseph Smith said, “I believe the Bible as it read when it came from the pen of the original writers.
Ignorant translators, careless transcribers, or designing and corrupt priests have committed many errors.”
Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 327: see also History of the Church, 1:245

Plain and precious parts were taken from the gospel of the Lamb (New Testament), and also many covenants
(Old Testament) (v. 26). The Prophet Joseph Smith observed: “From sundry revelations which had been received, it
was apparent that many important points touching the salvation of men, had been taken from the Bible, or lost before it
was compiled” (TPJS, 9-10). These revelations would include but not be limited to, “the fullness of John’s record is
hereafter to be revealed” (D&C 93:6), the things that “were all written in the book of Enoch, and are to be testified of
in due time (D&C 107:57). The Book of Moses and the Book of Abraham, already restored in the Pearl of Great Price, give further support to the loss of plain and precious things. A few other examples will illustrate the errors or deletions in the texts. A comparison of the sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7), and the same sermon given to the Nephites (3 Nephi 12:1-15), or a comparison of the discourse of the signs of his coming (Matthew 24) with the JST, Matthew 24 in the Pearl of Great Price and D&C 45 each show some of the losses in the New Testament. The covenants lost from the Old Testament are verified in the Book of Mormon where Lehi quotes some of the great covenants made to Joseph (2 Nephi 3). Also a more complete account of the covenant made to Abraham is found in the Book of Abraham 2:8-11 than is found in Genesis 12:2-3.

Monte S. Nyman, *I Nephi Wrote a Record*, p. 179

Does the Bible contain enough detail to instruct them fully regarding the original Christian Church and its doctrines, so that they really may accomplish this return?

On this latter point, the clerics say that the Bible is sufficient, for it contains all of God's word. And yet the Bible itself admits that it is an incomplete record and does not contain all of God's word. It mentions other books of scripture which are not within its covers and therefore are not available for study by anyone seeking the full truth of the gospel.

Moses spoke of the "Book of the Covenant," which we do not have. He also mentions the "Book of the Wars of Israel," which has never been found.

We might not miss reading about their wars, but it would be most helpful in a return to God if mankind had the book of the sacred covenants which the Almighty made with his people.

The "Book of Jasher," referred to by Joshua, is not in the Bible. The same is true of the "Book of the Acts of Solomon," referred to in First Kings.

The books of Nathan and Gad, both of whom were prophets and seers, are missing. As inspired men, their writings would be an enlightening guide on the way of truth.

Ahijah and Iddo were prophets and seers likewise. Would their works not inspire modern people if they were available? But where are they? Can we say that our Bible is actually complete without them?

The "Book of Jehu" is mentioned in the Old Testament but is not included in it. Isaiah wrote a second book known as the "Acts of Uzziah," but where is it? Will anyone say that Isaiah's writings are not inspirational? His second book might prove to be most invaluable if we had it.

"The Sayings of the Seers," another book of sacred writings, is referred to in the Bible. Where is it now? Would it not be good for today's Christians in their spiritual meanderings?

Paul wrote letters, in addition to those we have in our Bible, and speaks of them. He wrote a third letter to the Corinthians, and at least another one to the Ephesians. Where are they? He also wrote an Epistle to the Laodiceans, but it is not in our possession. Is the Bible then complete? Does it contain all of God's word?

Jude wrote another Epistle in addition to the one in the New Testament. He also mentions a volume of scripture known as the "Prophecies of Enoch" to which he evidently had access, but which we do not have today.

Then there is the matter of the Savior's teachings. He lived an intensive and full life during the three years of his public ministry. He preached to multitudes repeatedly. He conversed with individuals almost constantly, and gave many intimate instructions to the Twelve.

Can anyone say that his three years of instruction are contained in the Bible? May they be read in the few hours it takes to peruse what he said in the four Gospels? Can three years of the Savior's eloquent teachings be condensed into three hours of reading material? The Apostle John says twice in his Gospel that not a fraction of the Savior's ministry is recorded.
Much as we love it, sincerely as we believe it, can we in all truth say that the Bible is complete, that it contains all of God’s word, or even the full text of the Savior’s instructions?

Obviously the Lord gave other revelations anciently. He had prophets in addition to those usually mentioned in the Bible. They spoke for him. They gave enlightenment to ancient men and they would give us light, too, if only we had their writings.

Elder Mark E. Petersen, Conference Report, April 1964, First Day—Morning Meeting, p.18-19

1 Nephi 13:34-38

If the Indians had all that was rightfully theirs they would not be where they are and we would not be where we are. Remember that. We are here through the grace of God, and do not forget it. The Lord gave us to share in inheritance with the Indians in this glorious land which is choice above all other land sin all the world. But it is ours only on the condition, as I see it, that we do our part in seeing that these people come into the Church.

Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, p. 237

No Unhallowed Hand Will Stop the Progress of the Kingdom of God

We shall go forward according to the divine timetable, a timetable under which the Lord will prepare the way for us to teach the gospel in one nation after another as rapidly as our strength and means are sufficient for us to do the work.

Nephi foresaw that we shall establish congregations of the saints in all nations and among all peoples and kindreds before the promised unity of the faith. Speaking of this dispensation, he said: [1 Nephi 14:12 is quoted]

That is, before the millennial era, before the time when Christ shall reign personally upon the earth, the elect of God among every kindred, the saints who speak every tongue, the converts among all peoples and nations, having first believed the restored gospel, will go to the temples of God and receive the ordinances of exaltation whereby they qualify to become kings and priests....

And truly did Joseph Smith prophesy: “…the Standard of Truth has been erected; no unhallowed hand can stop the work from progressing; persecutions may rage, mobs may combine, armies may assemble, calumny may defame, but the truth of God will go forth boldly, nobly, and independent, till it has penetrated every continent, visited every clime, swept every country, and sounded in every ear, till the purposes of God shall be accomplished, and the great Jehovah shall say the work is done.” (Documentary History of the Church, Vol. 4, p. 540.)

Bruce R. McConkie in CR, Apr. 1969, p. 144

1 Nephi 13:40

With regard to omissions from the precious Holy Bible, in only one chapter of 1 Nephi, chapter 13, four phrases appear: taken away, four times; taken out, once; kept back, twice; and taken away out of, once. Eight indications of omissions because of transmission deficiencies appear in one chapter! Moreover, as Nephi indicated, it was the “precious things” which had been lost. You will recall that Joseph Smith’s translation of Luke 11:52 shows Jesus criticizing those, then, who had “taken away the key of knowledge, the fullness of the scriptures” (JST, Luke 11:53).

While we do not know precisely what was “kept back” or “taken away” (see 1 Nephi 13:40), logically there would be a heavy representation of such plain and precious truths in the Restoration. Therefore, the “other books” provide precisely that which God is most anxious to have “had again” among the children of men, so that we might know the truth of things, in Jacob’s felicitous phrase, of “things as they really are” (Jacob 4:13).

Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate, Jr., eds., First Nephi: The Doctrinal Foundation, p.2 - 3
Conclusion

Ezra Taft Benson:
Every member of the priesthood should understand the divine plan designed by the Lord to raise up the first free people in modern times. Here is how scripture says it was achieved:

First: Prophecy is abundant that God deliberately kept the American continent hidden until after the Holy Roman Empire had been broken up and the various nations had established themselves as independent kingdoms. Keeping America hidden until this time was no accident (2 Nephi 1:6, 8).

Second: At the proper time, God inspired Columbus to overcome almost insurmountable odds to discover America and bring this rich new land to the attention of the gentiles in Europe (1 Nephi 13:12).

Third: God revealed to his ancient American prophets that shortly after the discovery of America there would be peoples in Europe who would desire to escape the persecution and tyranny of the Old World and flee to America (1 Nephi 13:13-16).

Fourth: God told his prophets that the kingdoms in Europe would try to exercise dominion over the people who had fled to America, but that in the wars for independence the American settlers would win. (This is a remarkable prophecy in that 2,300 years before the Revolutionary War was fought, God through his prophets predicted who would win it.) (1 Nephi 13:16-19).

Fifth: The prophets were told that in the latter days when the Gentiles came to America, they would establish it as a land of liberty on which there would be no kings. The Lord declared that he would protect the land, and whosoever would try to establish kings either from within or without would perish (2 Nephi 10:8-14).

Sixth: Having declared America to be a land of liberty, God undertook to raise up a band of inspired and intelligent leaders who could write a constitution of liberty and establish the first free people in modern times. The hand of God in this undertaking is clearly indicated by the Lord himself in a revelation to the Prophet Joseph Smith in these words: "...I established the Constitution of this land, by the hands of wise men whom I raised up unto this very purpose..." (D&C 101:80).

Seventh: God declared that the United States Constitution was divinely inspired for the specific purpose of eliminating bondage and the violation of the rights and protection which belong to “all flesh” (See D&C 101:77-80).

Eighth: God placed a mandate upon his people to befriend and defend the constitutional laws of the land and see that the rights and privileges of all mankind are protected. He verified the declaration of the founding fathers, that God created all men free. He also warned against those who would enact laws encroaching upon the sacred rights and privileges of free men. He urged the election of honest and wise leaders and said that evil men and laws were of Satan. (Ibid., 98:5-10.)

Ninth: God predicted through his prophets that this great gentile nation, raised up on the American continent in the last days, would become the richest and most powerful nation on the face of the earth; even "above all other nations." (See 1 Nephi 13:15, 30; Ether 2:12.)

Tenth: Concerning the United States, the Lord revealed to his prophets that its greatest threat would be a vast, worldwide "secret combination" which would not only threaten the United States but also seek to "overthrow the freedom of all lands, nations, (Ether 8:25."

Eleventh: In connection with attack on the United States, the Lord told the Prophet Joseph Smith there would be an attempt to overthrow the country by destroying the Constitution. Joseph Smith predicted that the time would come when the Constitution would hang, as it were, by a thread, and at that time "this people will step forth and save it from the threatened destruction." (Journal History, Brigham Young’s Speech, July 4, 1854.) It is my conviction that the elders of Israel, widely spread over the nation will at that crucial time successfully rally the righteous of our country and provide the necessary balance of strength to save the institutions of constitutional government.
Twelfth: The Lord revealed to the Prophet Nephi that he established the gentiles on this land to be a free people forever, that if they were a righteous nation and overcame the wickedness and secret abominations which would arise in their midst, they would inherit the land forever. (1 Nephi 14:1-2.)

Thirteenth: But on the other hand, if the gentiles on this land reject the word of God and conspire to overthrow liberty and the Constitution, then their doom is fixed, and they "... shall be cut off from among my people who are of the covenant." (1 Nephi 14:6; 3 Nephi 21:11, 14, 21; D&C 84:114-115, 117.)

Fourteenth: The great destructive force which was to be turned loose on the earth and which the prophets for centuries have been calling the "abomination of desolation" is vividly described by those who saw it in vision. Ours is the first generation to realize how literally these prophecies can be fulfilled now that God, through science, has unlocked the secret to thermonuclear reaction.