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## 3 Nephi 30 — Hearken, O Ye Gentiles — The Closing Call to Come and Be Numbered

*3 Nephi 30: the closing chapter of the book, two verses, the direct call of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, spoken through Mormon by command. 'Hearken, O ye Gentiles, and hear the words of Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, which he hath commanded me that I should speak concerning you.' And the call itself: 'Turn, all ye Gentiles, from your wicked ways; and repent of your evil doings, of your lyings and deceivings, and of your whoredoms, and of your secret abominations, and your idolatries, and of your murders, and your priestcrafts, and your envyings, and your strifes, and from all your wickedness and abominations, and come unto me, and be baptized in my name, that ye may receive a remission of your sins, and be filled with the Holy Ghost, that ye may be numbered with my people who are of the house of Israel.' The chapter is the capstone of 3 Nephi — the Lord's own invitation to the Gentiles to turn, repent, come, be baptized, be filled with the Holy Ghost, and be numbered at last among the house of Israel: the gathering of the covenant reaching out to embrace all who will come.*

The supreme book of the Book of Mormon ends with two verses — and they are a *call*. After the descent of Christ, the sermon, the sacrament, the healing of the children, the prayer of unity, the gathering prophecies, the definition of the gospel, the Three who tarry, and the warning against spurning — after all of it, the book closes with the Lord's own *invitation*, spoken through Mormon to the Gentiles, to *come*. It is the gospel reduced to its essence and aimed straight at the reader: *Hearken... turn... repent... come unto me... be baptized... be filled with the Holy Ghost... that ye may be numbered with my people who are of the house of Israel*. Every great theme of 3 Nephi — the gathering of Israel, the grafting of the Gentiles, the gospel of repentance and baptism, the filling of the Spirit — is gathered here into a single, direct, personal call. The book that recorded the visit of the risen Christ ends by turning to *us* and saying: *come*.

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## Hebrew Word Studies

*shema* (שמע) — "to hear, listen, hearken, obey, understand" — *shema*, to hear — but in Hebrew, hearing and obeying are one act: to truly hear the word of God is to do it. The first word of Israel's great confession (*Shema Yisrael*, "Hear, O Israel"), where hearing means heeding with the whole heart v. 1 (*Hearken, O ye Gentiles, and hear the words of Jesus Christ*). The book ends with the word *Hearken*, and behind it stands the great Hebrew verb *shema*, "to hear" — one of the most important words in all of scripture, and far richer than the English "hear." For in Hebrew, *shema* does not mean merely to register sound with the ears; it means to *hear and heed*, to *listen and obey*, to *attend with the intent to act*. Hearing and obeying are, in Hebrew, a *single* act — there is no true *hearing* of God's word that does not issue in *doing* it. This is why *shema* is the first word of Israel's central confession of faith, the *Shema: Hear (shema), O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart* (Deut. 6:4–5). To *shema* — to *hear* — is to take the word into the heart and let it command the life; the *Shema* is not a call merely to *listen* to a doctrine but to *heed* it with the whole self, to love and obey the God it proclaims. And throughout scripture, *shema* is the word for the proper response to God: *if ye will obey (shema) my voice indeed, and keep my covenant* (Ex. 19:5); *behold, to obey (shema) is better than sacrifice* (1 Sam. 15:22); *O that my people had hearkened (shema) unto me* (Ps. 81:13). To *hear* God is to *obey* him; to fail to *do* is to have failed to truly *hear*. And this is exactly the force of the book's closing word. *Hearken, O ye Gentiles, and hear the words of Jesus Christ* (v. 1) — the call is not merely to *read* the words, or to *consider* them, or even to *believe* them in the abstract, but to *shema* them: to hear them with the intent to *obey*, to let them command the life, to *turn* and *come* and *be baptized* as the words direct. The whole of 3 Nephi has been leading to this *shema* — for what good is it to read the account of Christ's visit, to study his sermon and his gospel and his gathering, if one does not *hearken*, does not *do* what he says? The Sermon at the Temple ended on exactly this point: *whoso heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them* is the wise man on the rock; *every one that heareth these sayings... and doeth them not* is the fool on the sand (3 Ne. 14:24–26). To *hear and do* is the rock; to *hear and not do* is sand. And the book's final word, *Hearken*, is the call to be the wise hearer — to let the words of Jesus Christ, having been *heard*, become *done*: to turn, to come, to be baptized, to be filled, to be numbered. There is a deep fitness in ending the supreme book with *shema*. The whole record exists to be *heard* — and *heard* in the Hebrew sense, heard-and-heeded, heard-and-obeyed. The Lord came down, taught, healed, prayed, defined his gospel, and extended his gathering to all the world; and the one thing required of the reader is to *shema* — to *hearken*, to truly hear, and so to *do*: to answer the call with the turning and the coming and the baptism that true hearing always produces. *Hearken, O ye Gentiles* — hear, and heed, and come; for the word of Christ is given not to be admired but to be *obeyed*, and the soul that truly *hears* it is the soul that turns, and comes, and is numbered at last with the people of God.

## From the Chapter's Architecture

```cross-references Deut. 6:4–5 (*Hear — shema — O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart — the great Shema, the hearing that obeys*, v. 1); 1 Sam. 15:22 (*to obey — shema — is better than sacrifice — hearing as obeying*, v. 1); Ex. 19:5 (*if ye will obey — shema — my voice... then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me — the hearkening that brings into the covenant*, vv. 1–2); Matt. 11:28 (*come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest — the come unto me of v. 2*); 3 Ne. 9:22 (*repent, and come unto me ye ends of the earth, and be saved — the same invitation*, v. 2); 3 Ne. 27:20 (*repent... and come unto me and be baptized... that ye may be sanctified by the reception of the Holy Ghost — the gospel call*, v. 2); Acts 2:38 (*repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost — the pattern of v. 2*); Gal. 3:28–29 (*there is neither Jew nor Greek... and if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed — the Gentiles numbered with Israel*, v. 2); Rom. 11:17–24 (*the Gentiles grafted in among the natural branches of Israel — numbered with the house of Israel*, v. 2); Eph. 2:11–19 (*the Gentiles once strangers from the covenants... now... fellowcitizens with the saints — the dissolution of the line*, v. 2); 3 Ne. 2:16; 21:22 (*the converted numbered among the covenant people — the grafting fulfilled in v. 2*); 3 Ne. 16:13 (*if the Gentiles will repent and return unto me... they shall be numbered among my people, O house of Israel — the promise this closing call fulfills*). ```