
THE BOOK OF
MORMON
=
THE KEYSTONE

I NEPHI

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**The
Book of Mormon**



**The
Keystone
of Our
Religion**

LESSONS FROM 1 NEPHI

- Overview, Plates, Language, Timeline
- Context for the Story
- Prophecy and Escape
- Visits back for records / friends
- Visions in the desert
- Journeys, Liahona, and Sufferings
- Rebellions
- Ship building and Ocean faring
- Reaching the Promised Land

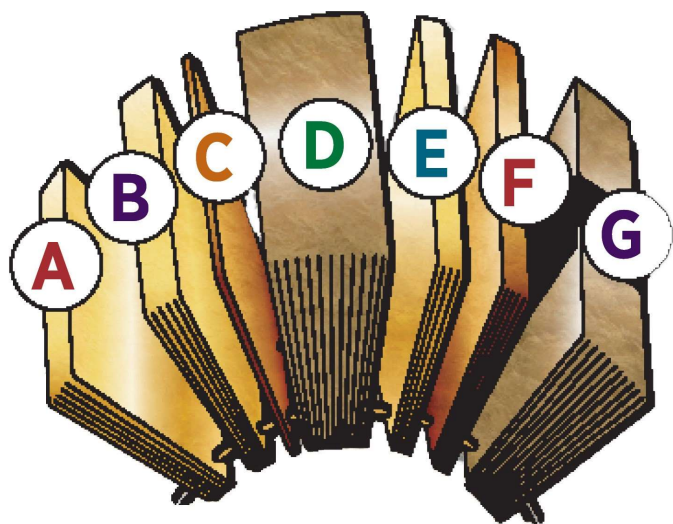
Summary

- 7 chapters; 986 verses
- Unabridged from the Small Plates of Nephi
- Covers ~ 12 years
- Begins at Jerusalem, approximately 600 years before the coming of Christ
- Recorded 30 years after leaving Jerusalem

I Nephi – Overview (Prologue)

1. An account of Lehi, Sariah and his four sons: Laman, Lemuel, Sam and Nephi
2. Lehi prophecies to the people of Jerusalem concerning their iniquity
3. The Lord warns Lehi to depart out of the Land of Jerusalem
4. They travel three days into the wilderness
5. Then the sons return to Jerusalem to obtain the record of the Jews
6. This is an account of their suffering
7. They marry the daughters of Ismael
8. They come to the “large waters”
9. Laman and Lemuel rebel against Lehi and Nephi
10. Nephi confounds them and builds a ship
11. They name the place Bountiful
12. They cross the ocean into the promised land

THE RECORDS INCLUDED IN THE PLATES



- A – Lost abridgement
- B – Small plates of Nephi (unabridged)
- C – Words of Mormon
- D – Large plates of Nephi (abridged)
- E – 24 Gold Plates (abridged)
- F – Moroni's writing
- G – Sealed Portion

THE SMALL PLATES

- II Nephi 4:43-50
- Written 30 years after leaving Jerusalem
- Jacob 2:66-69 <1% included
- 67 And a hundredth part of the proceedings of this people, which now began to be numerous, can not be written upon these plates;
68 But many of their proceedings are written upon the larger plates, and their wars, and their contentions, and the reigns of their kings.
69 These plates are called the plates of Jacob; and they were made by the hand of Nephi.

THE SMALL PLATES – 1 NEPHI 2:1-6

- 1 And now I, Nephi, do not give the genealogy of my fathers in this part of my record; neither at any time shall I give it after upon these plates which I am writing; for it is given in the record which has been kept by my father; wherefore I do not write it in this work.
- 2 For it sufficeth me to say that we are a descendant of Joseph.
- 3 And it mattereth not to me that I am particular to give a full account of all the things of my father, for they can not be written upon these plates, for I desire the room that I may write of the things of God.
- 4 For the fullness of mine intent is that I may persuade men to come unto the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, and be saved.
- 5 Wherefore the things which are pleasing unto the world, I do not write, but the things which are pleasing unto God and unto those who are not of the world.
- 6 Wherefore I shall give commandment unto my seed, that they shall not occupy these plates with things which are not of worth unto the children of men.

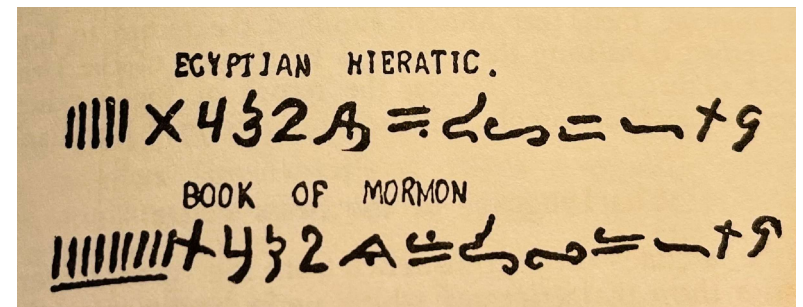
THE SMALL PLATES – 1 NEPHI 3:1

And now I, Nephi, proceed to give an account upon these plates, of my proceedings, and my reign and ministry; wherefore, to proceed with mine account, I must speak somewhat of the things of my father, and also of my brethren.

THEIR LANGUAGE

The Nephites

- Spoke Hebrew language (language in Jerusalem at the time that they and the Mulekites left)
- Recorded in reformed Egyptian
- Mormon 4:98-100



Thelona Stevens

LANGUAGE (CONT.) - NEPHI

I, Nephi, having been born of goodly parents, therefore I was taught somewhat in all the learning of my father; and having seen many afflictions in the course of my days -- nevertheless, having been highly favored of the Lord in all my days; yea, having had a great knowledge of the goodness and the mysteries of God, therefore I make a record of my proceedings in my days; yea, I make a record in the language of my father, which consists of the learning of the Jews and the language of the Egyptians.

~ 1 Nephi 1:1

- ① Learning of the Jews = Hebrew
- ② Language of the Egyptians = Egyptian

LANGUAGE (CONT.) – MORMON’S COMMENTS

98 And now behold, we have written this record according to our knowledge in the characters, which are called among us the reformed Egyptian, being handed down and altered by us, according to our manner of speech.

99 And if our plates had been sufficiently large, we should have written in the Hebrew; but the Hebrew hath been altered by us also; and if we could have written in the Hebrew, behold, ye would have had no imperfection in our record.

100 But the Lord knoweth the things which we have written, and also that none other people knoweth our language, and because that none other people knoweth our language, therefore he hath prepared means for the interpretation thereof.

~ Mormon 4:98-100

CHIASMUS AT THE BEGINNING – 1 NEPHI 1:1,2

1 - Knowledge

2 - Record

3 - Language

4 - Learning of the Jews <= (*center point*)

3' - Language

2' - Record

1' - Knowledge

Learning of the Jews =
Hebrew style, grammar,
etc

WHAT IS CHIASMUS?

- Common Hebrew writing style of Parallelisms
- Most famous form of Parallelism for us, in regards to the BoM, is **chiasmus**
- Chiasmus is an inverted-parallel literary form that was employed by ancient Hebrew biblical writers, among others.
- An instance of this form, called a “chiasm,” presents two or more literary elements, and then restates them in reverse order.
- For example, Isaiah 22:22 is a two-element chiasm:

Example 1

So he shall (a) **open**, and none shall (b) **shut**;
And he shall (b') **shut**, and none shall (a') **open**.

DISCOVERY OF CHIASMS IN THE BOM

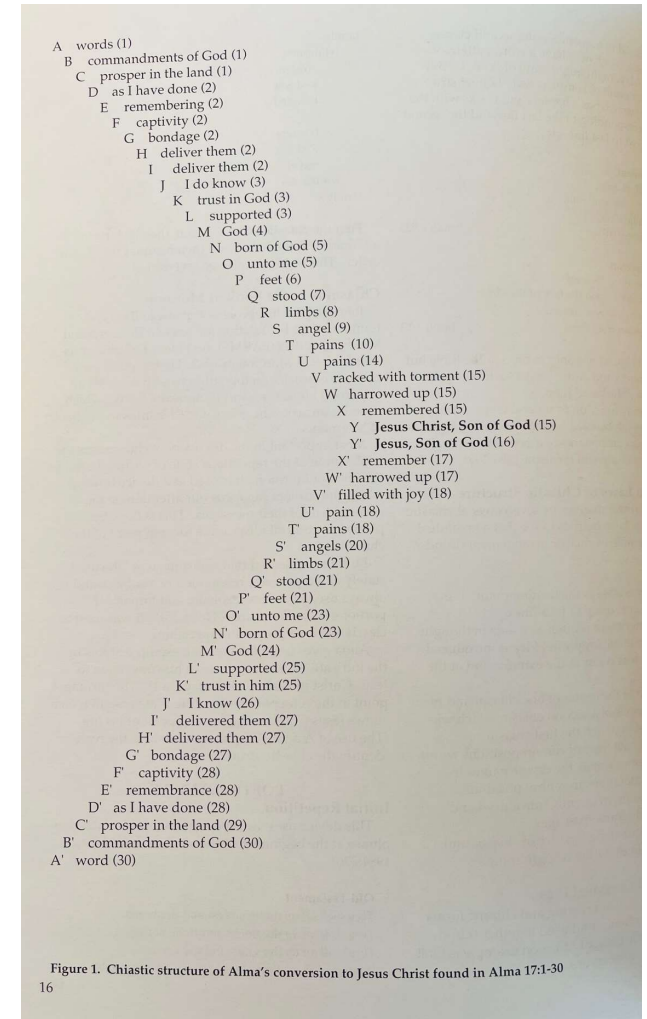
- 1967, a 20 year old Mormon missionary discovers Chiasmus in its pages
- John W. Welch was serving a Mormon missionary tour in Germany
- He saw an advertisement for a lecture series on Gospel of Matthew at a local college and attended
- The lecture was on the subject of chiasmus and a german book by Paul Gaechter
- August 16, 1967 @ 4am – “If it is evidence of Hebrew style in the New Testament, it must be evidence of Hebrew style in the Book of Mormon”



John Welch

EXAMPLE:ALMA 17 CHIASM

- Recent Book of Mormon Developments, Vol 2
- Pg 16
- BYU Probability Analysis of Chiasms appearing by chance
- Short chiasms are not uncommon in literature
- Long multi-element chiasms in the BoM are EXTREMELY unlikely to have occurred by chance
- No evidence that Joseph Smith, Jr had any exposure to chiasms and EXTREMELY unlikely that he would have discovered on his own



OTHER HEBREW LITERARY EXAMPLES

1. And
2. And it came to pass
3. Behold
4. Construct State
5. Numerals
6. Compound Subject
7. Repetition of the Preposition
8. Cognate Accusative
9. Compound Prepositions
10. Prophetic Perfect
11. Plural Forms
12. Repetition
13. Hebrew Idioms
14. Literal Translations
15. Parallelisms
16. Midrash
17. Many more

Source: Recent Book of Mormon Developments, vol 2

HEBRAISMS IN 1 NEPHI

“The Hebraic structure of the Book of Mormon and its many poetic examples are truly marvelous. For instance, within the first three verses alone, we have two beautifully developed chiastic structures.

Within the first chapter, we find at least fifteen other chiastic examples. In the 174 verses of the first chapter of First Nephi, more than forty-six other poetic examples have been identified.

As more Biblical scholarly research is done, the overwhelming evidence continues to support the authenticity of this ancient record.”

~ Angela Crowell

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND FOR THE BOM

- The covenants to the patriarchs (2100-1800 BC)
 - Abraham, Isaac, Jacob/Israel
 - 12 sons of Jacob/Israel
- The Judges of Israel (1146-1050 BC)
- The Kings of Israel (1050-930 BC)
 - Saul, David, Solomon, Rehoboam
- The Divided Monarchy (930BC)
 - Northern and Southern kingdoms
- Israel to Exile (722 BC)
 - Ten tribes scattered across Assyria
 - Isaiah (742 to 673 BC)
- Babylon ascends (612 to 605 BC)
 - Egypt and Assyria defeated
- Puppet-Kings before Lehi departs
 - Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiakin
 - Zedekiah – last king of Judah
 - ~ 22 years of reign; most of the wickedness occurred that Jeremiah and Ezekiel described

CONTEMPORARIES OF LEHI

- **Jeremiah**

- Remained in Jerusalem throughout the 3 deportations to Babylon and was forced to Egypt at the end of his life

- **Daniel**

- Deported to Babylon in 605BC

- **Ezekiel**

- Deported to Babylon in 597BC

- Lehi left after Daniel left, before Ezekiel and Jeremiah left

www.bomstudy.org

STATE OF ISRAEL AT THIS TIME

- II Chronicles 36:15-16

- 15 And the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place;
 - 16 But **they mocked the messengers of God**, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy.
-
- **Supports Nephites statement that God had sent prophets to testify to the people, such as Lehi**

STATE OF ISRAEL AT THIS TIME

■ Jeremiah 11:9-13

- 9 And the Lord said unto me, A conspiracy is found among the men of Judah, and among the inhabitants of Jerusalem.
- 10 They are turned back to the iniquities of their forefathers, which refused to hear my words; and they went after other gods to serve them; the house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken my covenant which I made with their fathers.
- 11 Therefore thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will bring evil upon them, which they shall not be able to escape; and though they shall cry unto me, I will not hearken unto them.
- 12 Then shall the cities of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem go, and cry unto the gods unto whom they offer incense; but they shall not save them at all in the time of their trouble.
- 13 For according to the number of thy cities were thy gods, O Judah; and according to the number of the streets of Jerusalem have ye set up altars to that shameful thing, even altars to burn incense unto Baal.

The People Groups

Jaredites

Book of Ether



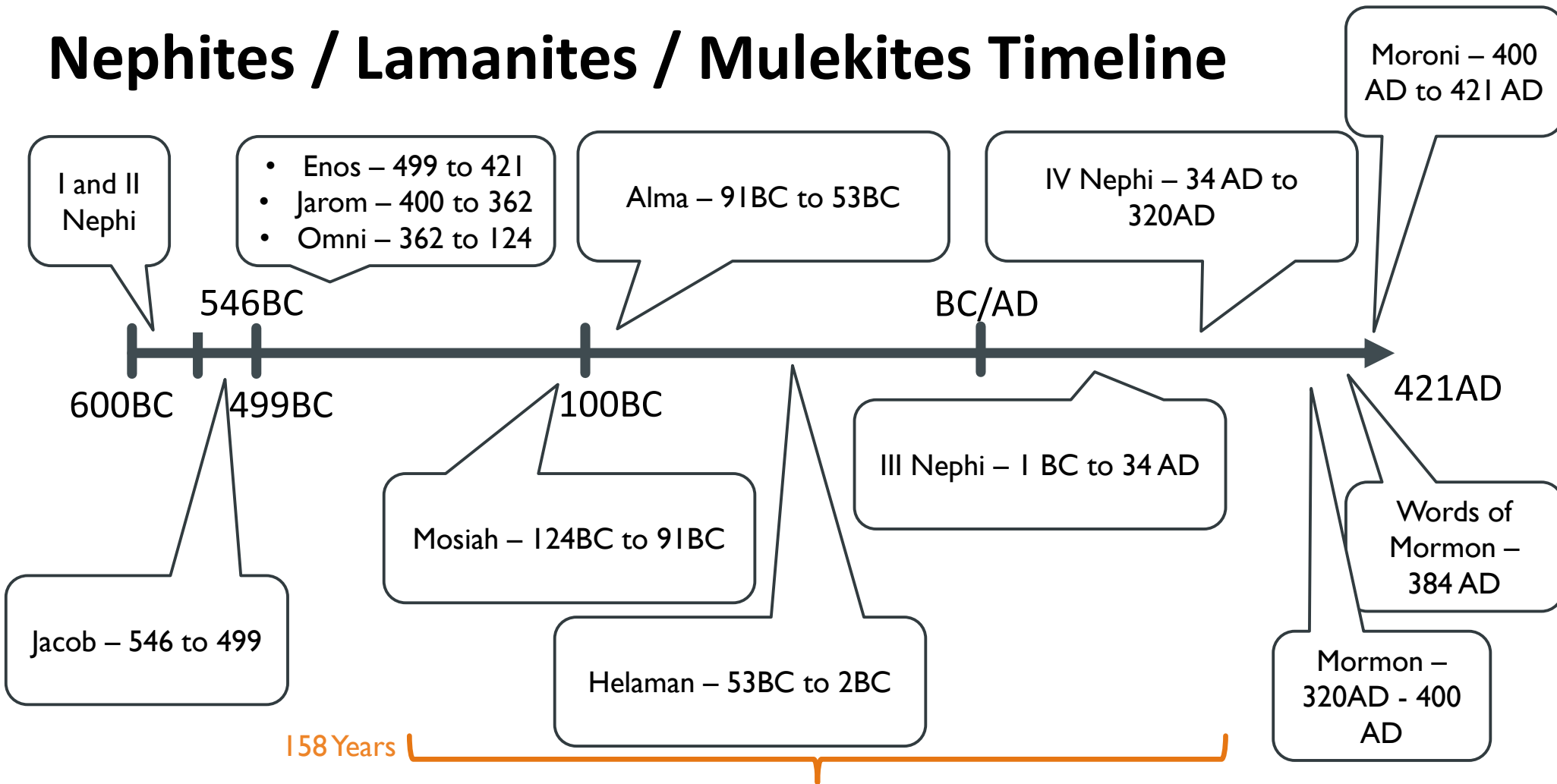
Origin:
Tower of Babel

Nephites & Lamanites / Mulekites



Destruction of
Jerusalem
~ 586BC

Nephites / Lamanites / Mulekites Timeline



LEHI – MERCHANT PRINCE

- Lehi was a clear example of a merchant prince of that era
- He was a wealthy landowner, having ancestral holdings outside of Jerusalem
- Had a household, treasure
- He knew Egyptian – written and spoken; in addition to Hebrew
- Wealth in those days came by trading and he was prepared to leave on short notice



600 YEARS?

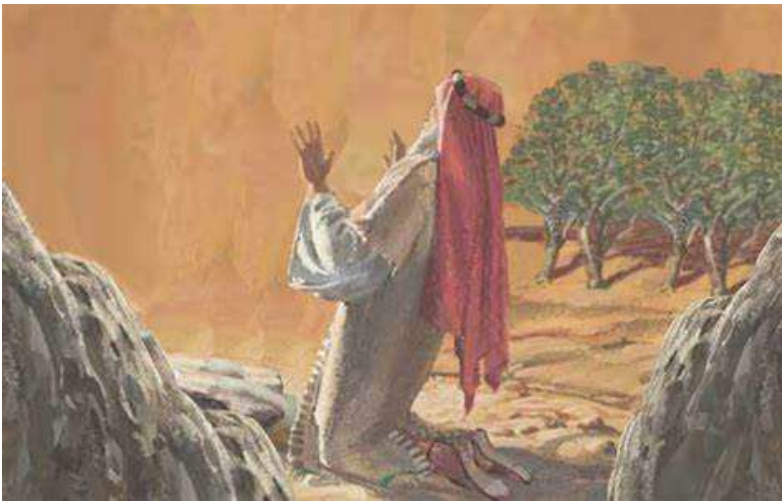
- Lehi left Jerusalem 600 years before Christ (BC) – I Nephi 3:4; I N 5:236; II N 11:35; III N 1:1
- Lehi left in first year of King Zedekiah reign (I N 1:3), archaeologists believe this was in 597BC
- III N 1:1 says sign of Jesus' birth was 600 years after Lehi left Jerusalem

Lehi to Jesus – 600 years or ~593 Years?

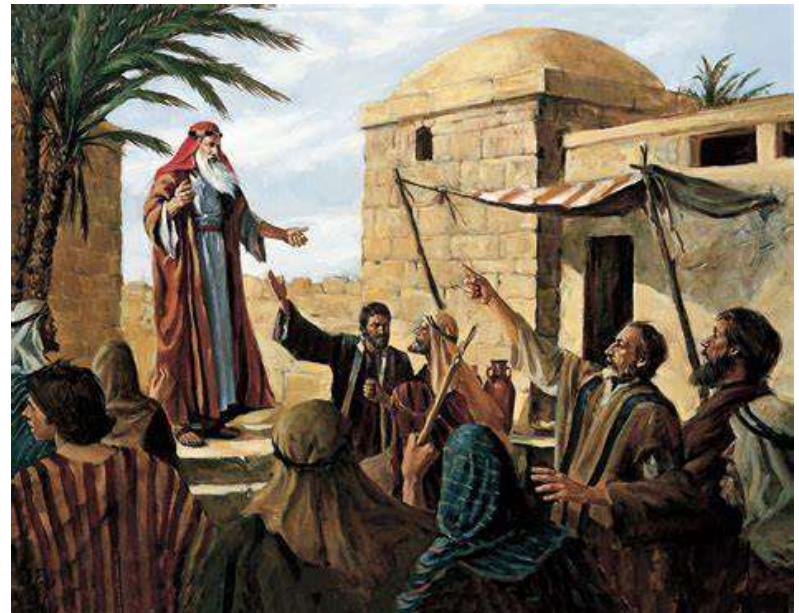


- Is 600 years just a round number / approximation? Is 597 more exact or even 593 // **that is one possible explanation**
- **Another possible explanation** – Maya long count calendar only had 360 days in a year; not 365.25 like the solar calendar
- John Sorenson (Mormon scholar) noted and Glenn Scott referenced that 600 Maya tuns (years) would equal 591.4 solar years, which would align with the time between Zedekiah and Jesus birth. No other calendar system would accommodate those facts.

LEHI – CONCERN FOR HIS PEOPLE



- Lehi prays for welfare of his people
- Pillar of fire; then witness of Jesus
- Vision of destruction of Jerusalem



- Lehi prophesied to the people, calling them to repentance
- I Nephi 1:13 – Reason for Lehi's optimism

LEHI – TIME TO FLEE

- God warned Lehi in a dream
- Time to flee to border of the Red Sea; was likely between 11-14 days journey (180 miles to get there) and then an additional 3 days (vrs 33)
- Those who left – Lehi, Sariah, Laman, Lemuel, Sam
- Jacob and Joseph weren't born yet; perhaps sisters weren't born yet either – II Nephi 4:8
- First camp site – River Laman; Valley Lemuel; quite possibly same place Moses met Jethro
- “River of water” – sounds ridiculous, but important near east figure of speech



MURMURING BEGINS



- Murmur – To grumble or complain

- And thus Laman and Lemuel, being the eldest, did murmur against their father...
- **Ignorance** – they knew not the dealings of that God who had created them
- **Doubt** – Neither did they believe that Jerusalem could be destroyed
- **Anger / Hate** – They sought to take away the life of their father

BETTER APPROACH - NEPHI

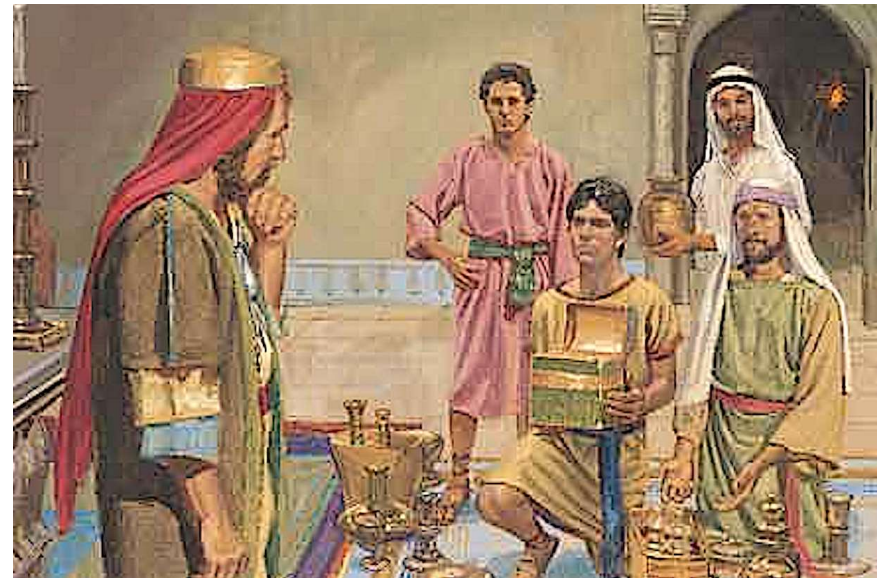
- Nephi may have had many of the same doubts and questions
- He went to God for understanding and received a personal testimony of the road ahead
- 1 Nephi 1:47-48
- God spoke to Nephi (vrs 53-58):
 - Sought God in the right way
 - Land of Promise
 - Brothers will be cut off and cursed, he will be ruler over them

LEHI HAS A DREAM – GO BACK FOR THE PLATES

- The boys were sent back to get the plates of brass from Laban
 - Were a record of the Jews and genealogy of Lehi's forefathers
- Good parenting advice – 1 Nephi 1:63
- God's blessing promised because Nephi didn't murmur
- "I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded, for I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them."
~ Nephi (1 N 1:65)

ATTEMPTS TO GET THE PLATES

- Strike 1 – Laman
 - Threw him out
- Strike 2 – All 4 boys, with their family wealth
 - Threw them out
 - Stole their property
 - Sent servants to kill them



WHY THE RECORDS WERE SO IMPORTANT

1

- 1 Nephi 1:82 And behold it is wisdom in God that we should obtain these records, that we may preserve unto our children the language of our fathers;

2

- 83 And also that we may preserve unto them the words which have been spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets, which have been delivered unto them by the spirit and power of God, since the world began, even down unto this present time.

LAMAN AND LEMUEL – 2ND EVIDENCE



- After failed attempt #2, they all hid in a cave
- L & L began beating Nephi and Sam
- An angel appeared to them
- Nephi – God is mightier than any man, let's listen to Him