
THE BOOK OF MORMON = THE KEYSTONE

I NEPHI

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Apr / May 2023

The Book of Mormon



The
Keystone
of Our
Religion

LESSONS FROM I NEPHI

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

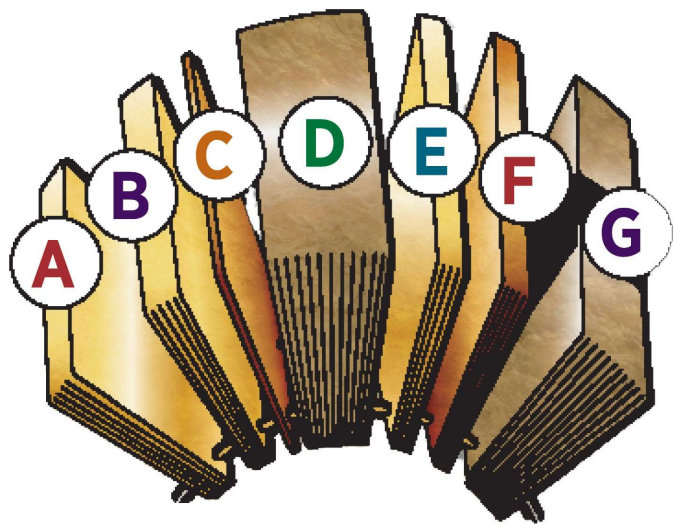
Summary

- 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.

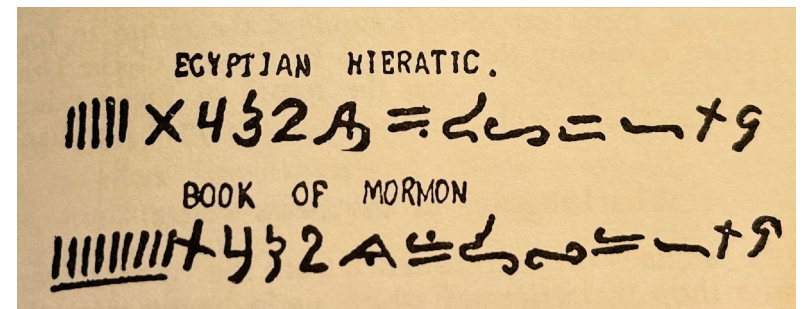
THE SMALL PLATES – 1 NEPHI 3:1

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

I - Knowledge

2 - Record

3 - Language

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

3' - Language

2' - Record

I' - 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

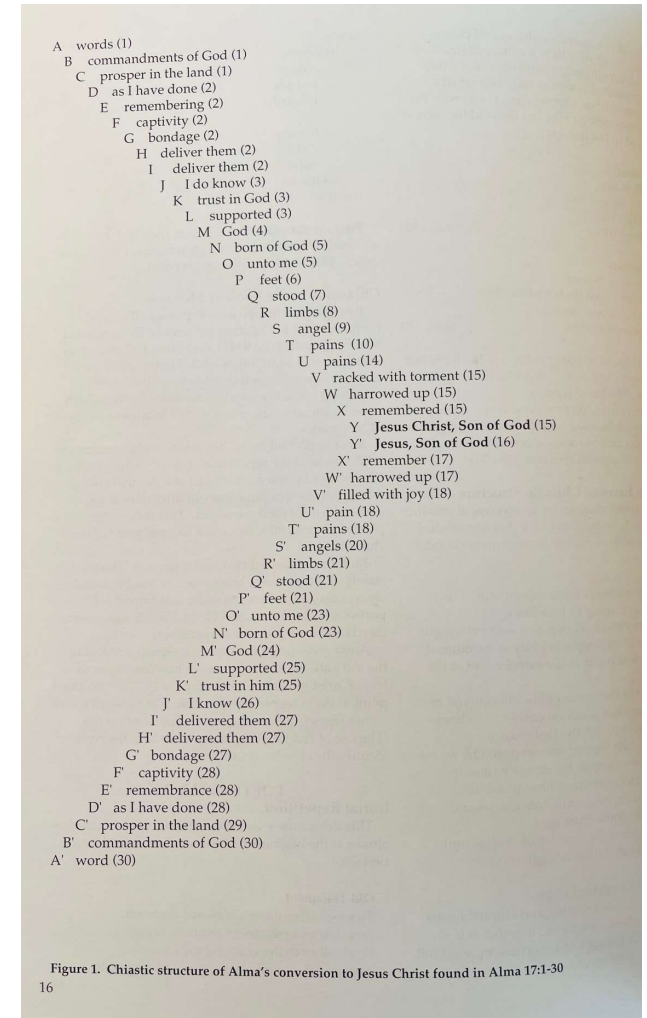
- 1967, a 20 year old Mormon missionary discovers Chiasmus in its pages
- John W. Welch was serving a Mormon missionary tour in Germany
- He saw an advertisement for a lecture series on Gospel of Matthew at a local college and attended
- The lecture was on the subject of chiasmus and a german book by 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



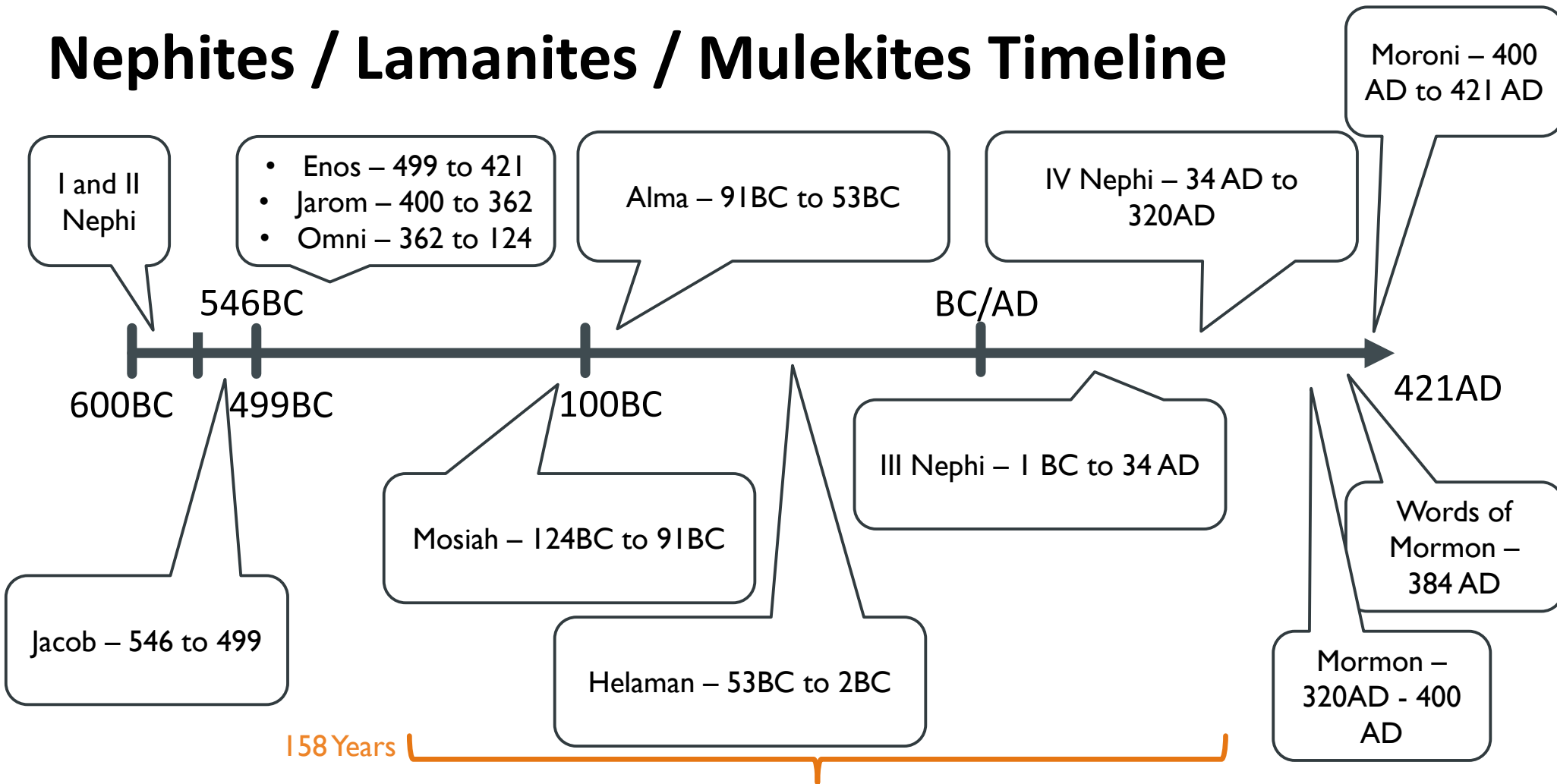
Origin:
Tower of Babel

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?

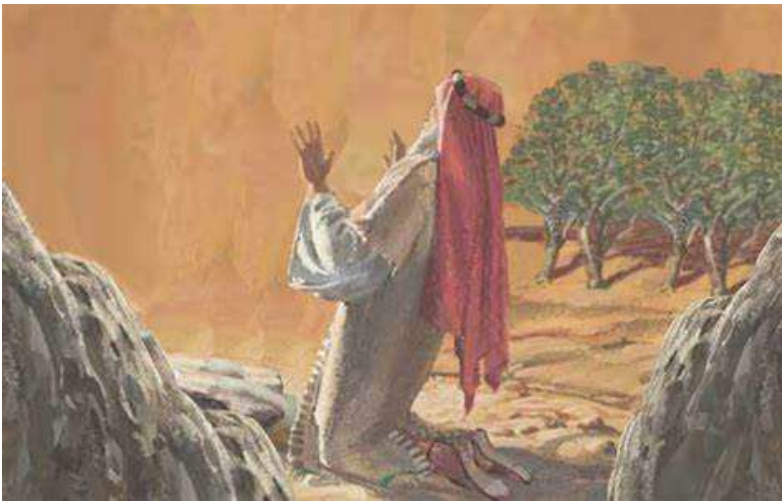
- Lehi left Jerusalem 600 years before Christ (BC) – I Nephi 3:4; I N 5:236; II N 11:35; III N 1:1
- Lehi left in first year of King Zedekiah reign (I N 1:3), archaeologists believe this was in 597BC
- III N 1:1 says sign of Jesus' birth was 600 years after Lehi left Jerusalem

Lehi to Jesus – 600 years or ~593 Years?

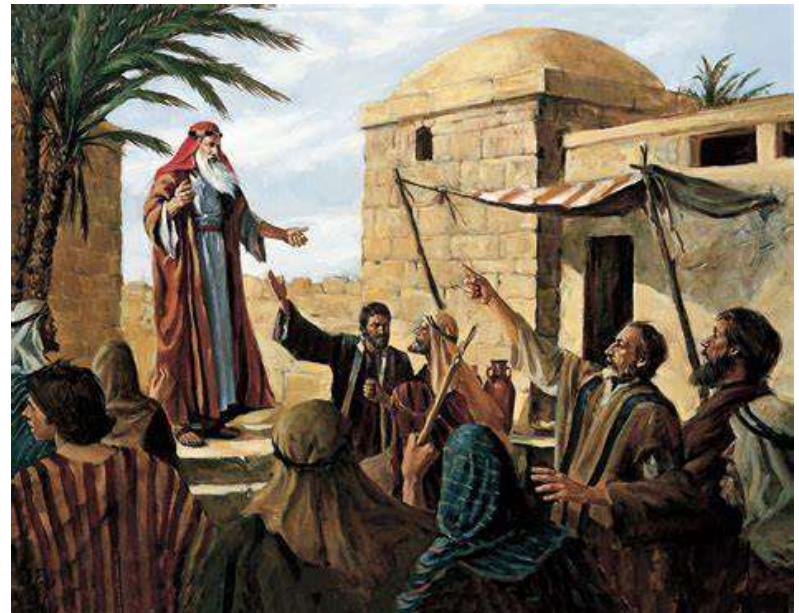


- Is 600 years just a round number / approximation? Is 597 more exact or even 593 // **that is one possible explanation**
- **Another possible explanation** – Maya long count calendar only had 360 days in a year; not 365.25 like the solar calendar
- John Sorenson (Mormon scholar) noted and Glenn Scott 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

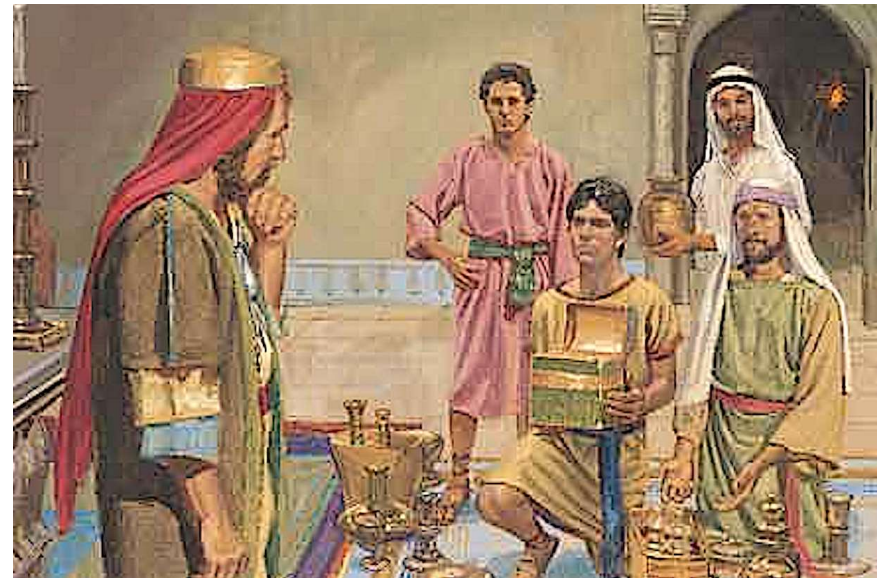
- Nephi may have had many of the same doubts and questions
- He went to God for understanding and received a personal testimony of the road ahead
- 1 Nephi 1:47-48
- God spoke to Nephi (vrs 53-58):
 - Sought God in the right way
 - Land of Promise
 - Brothers will be cut off and cursed, he will be ruler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

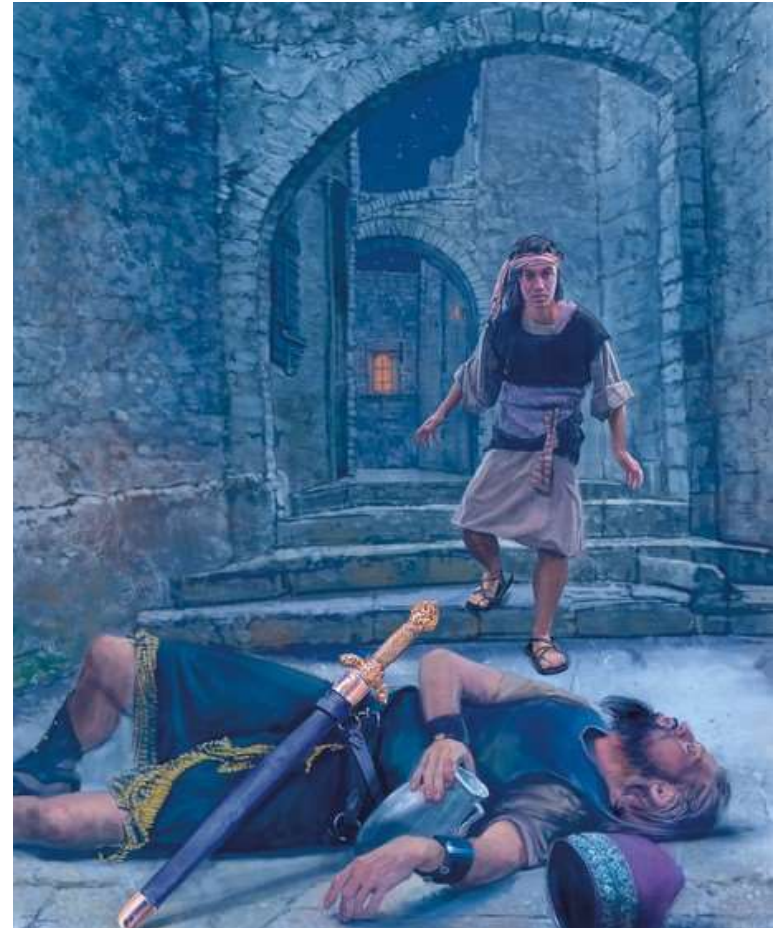
LAMAN AND LEMUEL – 2ND EVIDENCE



- 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

NEPHI SLAYS LABAN

- Nephi kills Laban
- Precedence from Old Testament
 - Exodus 21:12-14
- ① ■ Not premeditated – vrs 106
- ② ■ God delivered Laban – vrs 112
- ③ ■ God provides a place to flee to
 - “Better for one man to perish than a whole nation to dwindle in unbelief”



NEPHI OBTAINS THE PLATES / ZORAM JOINS



- Nephi put on Laban's armor and clothing
- He had Laban's sword, so Zoram didn't doubt that it was him
- Took Zoram with the plates outside the city walls to meet his brothers
- The strength of a promise
 - By God and Nephi's own honor

SARIAH STRUGGLED TOO

- She had complained; feared the boys were dead
- Lehi comforts her while the boys were gone
- Faith – Spoke in past tense of Land of Promise (vrs 150)
- When boys returned, she had her testimony (vrs 154, 155)



THE BRASS PLATES

Contents of The Brass Plates

- 1 Nephi 1:158-166; 6:2,3
- Contain 5 books of Moses – an account of Creation, Adam and Eve, record of the Jews down to Zedekiah
- Prophecies of the prophets down to Zedekiah, prophecies of Jeremiah and Isaiah
- Also contained genealogy of Lehi, he was descendant of Joseph as was Laban

Plates will help preserve the commandments of the Lord for their children (vrs 173)

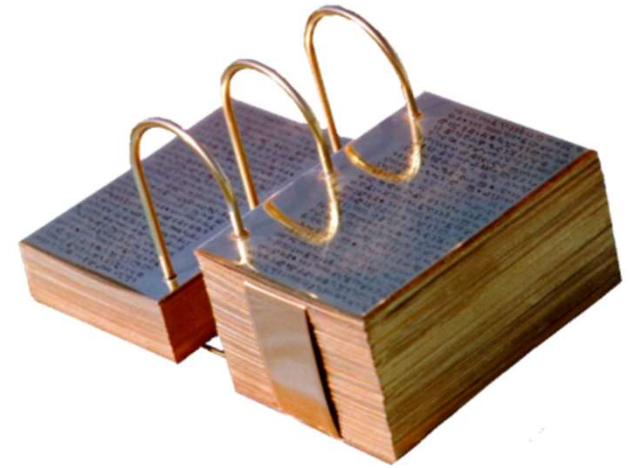
Interesting side note – Genealogy and Urim and Thummim lost (Ezra 2:59,62,63 and Nehemiah 7:61,64,65)

NEPHI'S SMALL PLATES

I Nephi 2:1-6

- Genealogy NOT included, it's in Lehi's record (lost)
- Nephi's intent for the content on these plates is to persuade men to come to God... and be saved
- Direction to his descendants : fill the plates with spiritual things

Also, see I Nephi 2:93-101



ONE MORE TRIP BACK – ISHMAEL & FAMILY



- 1 Nephi 2:7-37
- Ishmael and family agreed to go
- Strife in the dessert
- Able to quickly depart
- Perhaps Ishmael and Lehi were business partners
- Or possible that Ishmael and Lehi were related or perhaps Ishmael and Sariah were siblings

LEHI'S "CARAVAN"

- Lehi and Sariah
 - Laman
 - Lemuel
 - Sam
 - Nephi
 - Along the way – Jacob, Joseph
 - Not clear when – sisters
- Ishmael & Wife
 - Daughters – at least five
 - Sons – at least two
- Zoram

LEHI'S & NEPHI'S VISION

Next week

- Lehi's Vision
- 1 Nephi 2:41-92
- Nephi desires to see and understand the same
- 1 Nephi 3:37-127
- He explains to his brothers (Ch 4)



WEDDING DAY



- 1 Nephi 5:7
- In the valley of Lemuel – they may have spent a season or two there to grow crops
- 4 brothers + Zoram marry 5 daughters

THE LIAHONA

- 1 Nephi 5:11
- A round, brass ball
- Two spindles to point the way to go
- Writing on the Liahona – 5:32
- Worked by faith, diligence, heed – 5:34
- Writing changed – 5:35

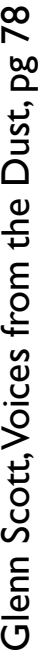


LIAHONA – A TYPE



- Alma 17:71-80
- Worked by faith, diligence, heed – 5:34
- Same goes for us in responding to the Words of Christ
- D&C 15:1b
- Liahona referred to as director or compass – but not like our modern definition of a compass

- They left valley of Lemuel after receiving the Liahona
- Traveled 8 years; likely stopped at some places for a season or two to grow crops
- The way was tough, had to eat raw meat at times
- 5:55 – turned nearly eastward for remainder of trip



BREAK A BOW

- Nephi broke his bow – 5:22
- Everyone murmured, even Lehi – 5:25
- Analogy for today – we must not murmur, we must seek counsel, and then we must DO God's will
- Looked to God and found direction on the Liahona



DEATH OF A PATRIARCH



- Ishmael died along the journey – 5:44
- In the place which was called Nahom
- Already a place existing since ~800 BC along the route called Nehm or Nehem
- Vowels weren't used until 6th century BC

BOUNTIFUL



Wadi Sayq is one possibility
for Bountiful



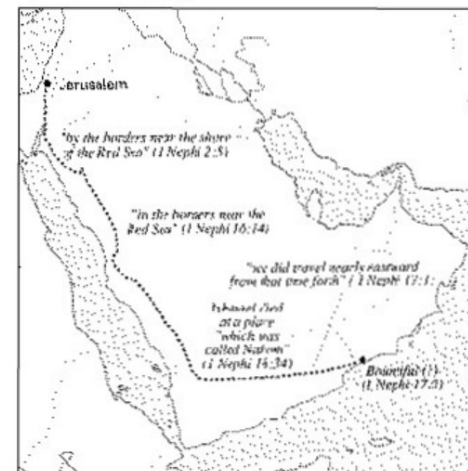
- After 8 years, arrived at coast and they called the place Bountiful
- Had fruit, wild honey
- Had a mountain nearby
- Nephi told that they were to build a boat which God would show them how
- Also had timber there

BOUNTIFUL - REQUIREMENTS

- The current-day Wadi Sayq (more specifically Khor Kharfot, a portion of Wadi Sayq, located in Oman) is the most probable location of Bountiful because it is the most fertile coastal location on the Arabian Peninsula.
- Unless the wadi is reached by traveling through the Arabian interior, as Lehi would have done, Wadi Sayq remains almost completely hidden. Wadi Sayq lies “nearly eastward” of Nehem, Yemen (assumed to be “Nahom”; 1 Nephi 16:34; 17:1), and is the only area in which fruit grows without being cultivated. It also contains the largest freshwater source on the Arabian coast.

Twelve Requirements for the Land of Bountiful

1. Fresh water available year-round
2. Contain “much fruit” and honey (1 Nephi 17:5, 6; 18:6)
3. Both general area (17:5, 8) and specific location where the Lehiites camped were fertile (17:6)
4. Permit reasonable access from the interior desert to the coast
5. A mountain prominent enough to justify Nephi’s reference to “the mount” (17:7, 18:3) and close enough that he could go there to “pray off” (18:3)
6. Cliffs from which Nephi’s brothers could have thrown him into the depths of the sea (17:48)
7. Shoreline (17:5) suitable for the construction and launching of a ship (18:8)



8. Ore and flint for Nephi’s tools (17:9–11, 16)
9. Enough large timber to build a seaworthy ship with (18:1, 2, 6)
10. Suitable winds and ocean currents to take the ship out into the ocean (18:8, 9)
11. No population residing in the area
12. “Nearly eastward of Nahom” (1 Nephi 17:1)

BOUNTIFUL - POSSIBILITY



LEHI'S & NEPHI'S VISION

- Lehi's Vision
- 1 Nephi 2:41-92
- Nephi desires to see and understand the same
- 1 Nephi 3:37-127
- He explains to his brothers (Ch 4)



NO ERASER ON METAL PLATES

1 Nephi 2:41 And it came to pass that while my father tarried in the wilderness he spake unto us, saying, Behold, I have dreamed a dream; **or in other words**, I have seen a vision.

- When inscribing on metal plates, you don't have an eraser, if you need to change something you wrote
- If you do have to modify or change it, you would use words such as the above
- Or in other words – found 10 times in the Book of Mormon

COMPONENTS OF LEHI'S VISION

- Important components:
 - Large and spacious field
 - Tree & Fruit
 - River of water
 - Rod of Iron
 - Strait and narrow path
 - Mists of Darkness
 - Fountain
 - Great and spacious building
- Different experiences of people:
 - Lehi
 - Lehi's family
 - 4 groups of people
- Which one are you?

STELA 5 - IZAPA



STELA 5 SIZE

1.5 Tons



Dr. Ross T. Christensen engaged in his 1962 study of Stela 5 at the ruins of Izapa.

INTERPRETATION OF LEHI'S VISION

Symbol	Interpretation	Examples Given
Dark and Dreary Waste		
Large and Spacious Field	The World	
Tree of Life	Love of God	The coming of the Son of God
Fruit of the Tree		Blessings from the Atonement
Fountain / River of Filthy Water	Hell and the depths thereof	Wickedness

INTERPRETATION OF LEHI'S VISION (CONT.)

Symbol	Interpretation	Examples Given
Rod of Iron	The word of God	The ministry of Jesus
Mist of darkness	Temptations of the devil	Apostasy, wickedness, war, the great and abominable church, plain and precious things removed from the scriptures
Great and spacious building	Pride, wisdom, and vain imaginations of the world	Persecution of the Son of God and those who follow Him

LESSONS – ALL INVITED TO COME TO CHRIST

- John 3:16
- God's love is the most desirable above all other things, most joyous to the soul
- All men MUST come unto Him or they cannot be saved (1 N 3:193)
- Final state of our souls is God's kingdom or cast out (1 N 4:61)



LESSONS – 4 GROUPS

- 3 groups seeking the tree
 1. Hit the mist of darkness and were lost
 2. Reached the tree but were ashamed by persecution and went away
 3. Reached the tree and partook of the fruit and joyous
- 4th group NOT seeking the tree, just the great building
- Compare with Parable of the Sower from Mark 4
 - Mark 4:12 – Don't know this parable? How will you know the rest?

LESSONS – 4 GROUPS / PARABLE OF THE SOWER

#	Parable of the Sower	Meaning	Lehi's Vision Groups
1	Seed fell by the wayside	Never responded to the call; Rejected the invitation to Come to Christ	People pressing to the building
2	Seed on stony ground	Fell away because of affliction or persecution	People who reached the tree but ashamed
3	Seed choked by thorns	Fell away because of temptations, cares of this world, deceitfulness of riches	People lost in the mists of darkness
4	Seed on good ground that yielded fruit	Hear the Word, receive it, bring forth fruit	People who reached the tree and partook of and enjoyed the fruit

LESSONS – HOLD FAST TO THE ROD OF IRON



- Clinging –
vrs 69
- Were
ashamed and
went away
- Continually
holding fast
– vrs 78

Clinging equals occasionally in trials vs Continually –
How do you approach the Word?

LESSONS – BE READY FOR THE MISTS

- They're coming
- We all have to go through them
- They blind the eyes and harden the heart and designed to lead us astray



LESSONS – IGNORING PERSECUTION

- Hold fast to the Rod of Iron
- Persecution from:
 1. Vain imaginations (thoughts NOT based in reality)
 2. Pride of men (we don't need God, we are god of our own lives and destiny's)

