

BM#02 "All Things According to His Will" 1 Nephi 1-7

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I. Introduction

The Book of Mormon begins with a family. It is the family of Lehi and Sariah and their four sons, beginning with the oldest: Laman, Lemuel, Sam, and Nephi. We know that there were also girls in the family, as Nephi makes reference to them at the time of the separation from his brothers (2 Ne. 5:6), but the exact number is not known. Zoram, Laban's servant will join the family and two sons, Jacob and Joseph, will be born while the family is in the wilderness, Jacob and Joseph. We learn that another family, Ishmael and his family of daughters, at least five, will join them as they journey together to a promised land.

Lehi and all of his family lived in Jerusalem about B.C. 600. Lehi was a devout man, a Prophet, who received a vision from the Lord regarding the destruction of Jerusalem. Upon direction from the Lord, he shared this vision with the people, including his reading from a book that "manifested plainly of the coming of the Messiah, and the redemption of the world" (1 Nephi 1:19). Upon hearing his message, they were angry with him and "sought his life that they might take it away" (1 Nephi 1:20). Lehi had a dream and was told by the Lord, "that he was to take his family and depart into the wilderness" (1 Nephi 2:2).

The Book of Mormon covers the history of approximately B.C. 600 to A.D. 421. It tells of the establishment of a major group of people, the Nephites, and God's dealings with them. During this period of time, they experienced periods of righteousness as well as wickedness. When they were obedient to the counsel of the Lord, they prospered. When they were unrighteous and rejected the word of the prophets, they experienced great suffering which finally ended with their destruction.

1 Nephi, Chapter 1-7, covers the period between B.C. 600 to 592. It addresses: (1) Lehi leaving Jerusalem and departing into the wilderness; (2) Nephi and his brothers returning to Jerusalem to get the plates; (3) Nephi and his brothers returning with the brass plates, and, (4) The brothers return again to Jerusalem to persuade Ishmael and his family to join their family in the wilderness.

These initial chapters, like the rest of the book, serve as a reminder to each of us that our temporal safety and eternal salvation comes only through our obedience to the Lord as taught by his prophets and servants.

II. 1 Nephi 1-2

The record begins, but it is not a journal.

Bryan Richards states,

"Nephi is making this record long after his arrival in the land of promise. His writings are more like his personal memoirs than a daily journal. Apparently, Nephi began writing on the large plates of Nephi not long after arriving in the Americas (1 Ne 19:1-5). However, he did not begin to record on the small plates of Nephi until 30 years after their departure from Jerusalem (2 Ne 5:28-33). This is significant because his record is colored by the wisdom and perspective of his age; unnecessary details of daily affairs are not included. Nonetheless, Nephi is able to describe the spiritual experiences and revelations with remarkable detail."

www.gosepeldoctrine.com/contents/1Nephi-1).

1 Nephi 1:1

1 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.

Upon reflection, possibly as a parent himself, Nephi began his record with an expression of gratitude to his father, [and mother] for the instruction and direction he received

from them. Education was important to his parents, as well as his receiving spiritual guidance. The temporal knowledge and spiritual strength he received, provided him with a firm foundation upon which to build his life. His life however, was not without afflictions. Nevertheless, Nephi expresses appreciation for the blessings and knowledge he had received from the Lord that sustained him during these difficult times.

Unfortunately, not all begin their life, as did Nephi, with goodly parents. Death, divorce, even physical abandonment, can make a loving family seem like only a dream in a world of struggle and pain. Someday, you too will know the love of parents kind and dear. You have a heavenly father and mother who love you very much. More than you can know or even recognize, they are watching over you. Someday all will be well. Do not despair. Do your best, and know that they are always with you.

1 Nephi 1:2

2 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.

There has been much discussion among the experts regarding the language of the Book of Mormon.

As Hugh Nibley states,

"The fact remains that the abridging and editing of the Book of Mormon was in a language known to no other people on earth but the Nephites." (*Lehi in the Deseret--The World of the Jaredites--There Were Jaredities*, Vol. 5. Salt Lake City and Provo: Deseret Book Co., and Foundation for Ancient Records and Mormon Studies, 1988, 16).

1 Nephi 1:4

4 For it came to pass in the commencement of the first year of Zedekiah, king of Judah, (my father, Lehi, having dwelt at Jerusalem in all his days); and in that same year there came many prophets, prophesying unto the people that they must repent, or the great city Jerusalem must be destroyed.

There were "many prophets" who were prophesying to the citizens of Jerusalem that the city was going to be destroyed. Jeremiah was one of these prophets. (See B/M, Helaman 8:20; 2 Chron. 36:15).

1 Nephi 1:5

5 Wherefore it came to pass that my father, Lehi, as he went forth prayed unto the Lord, yea, even with all his heart, in behalf of his people.

Lehi is concerned regarding the well-being of his people. He petitions the Lord on their behalf and is giving a vision in which he sees God the Father "surrounded with numberless concourses of angels in the attitude of singing and praising their God" (1 Ne. 1:8). He also sees the pre-mortal Christ and his Apostles.

1 Nephi 1:9-10

**9 And it came to pass that he saw One descending out of the midst of heaven, and he beheld that his luster was above that of the sun at noon-day.
10 And he also saw twelve others following him, and their brightness did exceed that of the stars in the firmament.**

During the vision, Lehi is given a book and he reads.

1 Nephi 1:13

13 And he read, saying: Wo, wo, unto Jerusalem, for I have seen thine abominations! Yea, and many things did my father read concerning Jerusalem--that it should be destroyed, and the inhabitants thereof; many should perish by the sword, and many should be carried away captive into Babylon.

And then Lehi acted.

1 Nephi 1:18

18 Therefore, I would that ye should know, that after the Lord had shown so many marvelous things unto my father, Lehi, yea, concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, behold he went forth among the people, and

began to prophesy and to declare unto them concerning the things which he had both seen and heard.

It appears that this vision is Lehi's calling to be a prophet of the Lord. His initial assignment is to join with the other prophets and call the citizens of Jerusalem to repentance. If they do not repent, Jerusalem will be destroyed; her inhabitants taken captive to Babylon.

1 Nephi 1:19-20

19 And it came to pass that the Jews did mock him because of the things which he testified of them; for he truly testified of their wickedness and their abominations; and he testified that the things which he saw and heard, and also the things which he read in the book, manifested plainly of the coming of the Messiah, and also the redemption of the world.
20 And when the Jews heard these things they were angry with him; yea, even as with the prophets of old, whom that had cast out, and stoned, and slain; and they also sought his life, that they might take it away. But behold, I, Nephi, will show unto you that the tender mercies of the Lord are over all those whom he hath chosen, because of their faith, to make them mighty even unto the power of deliverance.

Lehi was obedient to the directive of the Lord and he stood with the other prophets and testified to the people. They were not receptive to his message and instead sought to take his life.

1 Nephi 2:1-2

1 For behold, it came to pass that the Lord spake unto my father, yea, even in a dream, and said unto him: Blessed art thou Lehi, because of the things which thou hast done; and because thou hast been faithful and declared unto this people the things which I commanded thee, behold, they seek to take away thy life.
2 And it came to pass that the Lord commanded my father, even in a dream, that he should take his family and depart into the wilderness.

It is not known the length of time that Lehi spent in calling the citizens of Jerusalem to repentance. It is

certain that it was for a sufficient period of time, in spite of the threat to his life, to determine that it was no longer safe for Lehi to remain in the land. Lehi had demonstrated his obedience and the Lord had another assignment for him. This assignment also involved his family. Their faith was to be tested as they were called to exchange all the conveniences of living in their furnished home, leave their friends, and depart into the wilderness. Here they would live in tents, without the contact with others outside those journeying with them, being subject to the extremes of temperature, and change of diet. While just the thought of camping out may bring horror to the minds of some, even for the devoted camper, this was going to be an extreme adventure.

1 Nephi 2:3-4

3 And it came to pass that he was obedient unto the word of the Lord, wherefore he did as the Lord commanded him.

4 And it came to pass that he departed into the wilderness. And he left his house, and the land of his inheritance, and his gold, and his silver, and his precious things, and took nothing with him, save it were his family, and provisions, and tents, and departed into the wilderness.

It is essential that where the word "he" is stated in verse four, it would be more accurate to state "we/they." While it was Lehi, who was the servant of the Lord, this was going to be a family adventure. This experience was going to be a test for all concerned. Put each of us under stressful circumstances and our true character shines forth. Some individuals rise to the occasion. They are strengthened, physically and spiritually, by the ebb and flow of their lives. Other do poorly, but press forward, and still others give up. The challenge of this assignment is going to be felt by each member, either to their blessing or detriment.

Before we proceed, it is important to make reference to 1 Nephi 1:17. He states,

1 Nephi 1:17

17 But I shall make an account of my proceedings in my days. Behold, I make an abridgment of the record of my

father, upon plates which I have made with mine own hands; wherefore, after I have abridged the record of my father then will I make an account of mine own life.

Basically this means that we have two records of similar events. One is written by Lehi, Nephi's father, and is referred to as the Book of Lehi. The second is Nephi's record as recorded on the "small plates of Nephi." Nephi states his reasoning for the creation of his second set of plates.

1 Nephi 9:3, 5

3 Nevertheless, I have received a commandment of the Lord that I should make these plates, for the special purpose that they should be an account engraven of the ministry of my people.

5 Wherefore, the Lord had commanded me to make these plates for a wise purpose in him, which purpose I know not.

J.B. Haws referencing to chapter IX of the Book of Commandments states,

"And now, verily I say unto you, that an account of those things that you have written, which have gone out of your hands [116 pages], are engraven upon the plates of Nephi [small plates of Nephi]"—in other words, 'The same basic story elements that you have already covered in translating the Book of Lehi ('an account of those things that you have written') are *also* narrated ('engraven') on the small plate of Nephi." ("The Lost 116 Pages Story: What We Do Know, What We Don't Know, and What We Might Know, " in *The Coming Forth of the Book of Mormon: The 44th Annual Brigham Young University Sidney B. Sperry Symposium*. Edited by Dennis L. Largey, Andrew H. Hedges, John Hilton III, and Kerry Hull. Provo, Utah and Salt Lake City, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University and Desert Book Co., 2015, 93).

After Joseph Smith had translated the first 116 pages, with Martin Harris as his scribe, Martin requested to take the record and show it to his wife. She, it seems was having difficulty with the amount of time that her husband was spending regarding the translation of the Book of Mormon,

and sought some proof of their accomplishment. The permission of the Lord was sought and after twice being told "No," permission was finally granted. The result was that the 116 pages were lost. All, however, was not lost. For the Lord had prepared a solution, and those who were planning to present the altered record were frustrated.

J.B. Haws continues,

"Latter-day Saints...see in the resolution of...[the]lost manuscript episode—after all the soul searching and heart wrenching it brought to Joseph Smith and Martin Harris—a miracle thousands of years in the making, beginning with Nephi's creation of a second record, and then Mormon's addition of that record to his abridgment (and both Nephi and Mormon wrote that they acted based on inspiration which they admitted they did not fully understand; See Words of Mormon 1:7; 1 Nephi 9:2, 5). Latter-day Saints see, in all of this, evidence that the Lord allows humans their agency, but neither human agency exercised in opposition to his will, nor 'the cunning of the devil,' can frustrate the works of God (D&C 10:43)." ("The Lost 116 Pages Story: What We Do Know, What We Don't Know, and What We Might Know, " in *The Coming Forth of the Book of Mormon: The 44th Annual Brigham Young University Sidney B. Sperry Symposium*. Edited by Dennis L. Largey, Andrew H. Hedges, John Hilton III, and Kerry Hull. Provo, Utah and Salt Lake City, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University and Desert Book Co., 2015, 95).

Lehi, after making the necessary preparation, departed Jerusalem with his family.

1 Nephi 2:6-7

6 And it came to pass that when he had traveled three days in the wilderness, he pitched his tent in a valley by the side of a river of water.

7 And it came to pass that he built an altar of stones, and made an offering unto the Lord, and gave thanks unto the Lord our God.

How far did Lehi and his family travel before they arrived at a destination where they were going to camp for a period of time? While the exact distance is not known, Sidney B. Sperry offers the following opinion.

Sidney B. Sperry states,

"There are two places we know of, either of which might well correspond to the description given of Lehi's encampment. The first is a place called Maquna or Mukna, about seventy miles down the east coast of the Gulf of Aqaba; the second is east of the mouth of the gulf, at a place called Ainunah. Ainunah is about one hundred miles in a direct line south and east of the northern tip of the gulf...Maqua would be my choice, if one had to be made, of the most likely spot where Lehi's family encamped." (*Book of Mormon Compendium*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1968, 98-99).

This would make the distance traveled in "three days in the wilderness" approximately 70 to 100 miles.

It is important to note that while encamped, they built "an altar of stones and made an offering unto the Lord, and gave thanks unto the Lord our God" (1 Nephi 2:7).

Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet state,

"As a prophet, Lehi held the Melchizedek Priesthood and by that authority offered sacrifice (Teaching of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 181). The practice and principles of sacrifice is of ancient origin; it was taught to Adam by an angel of the Lord, a being who explained that sacrifices and all things were to be done in the name of the Only Begotten Son (Moses 5:5-8)...The Book of Mormon writers made no attempt to elaborate upon the nature or type of their offerings...It would appear, therefore, that the sacrifices performed by the Lehite colony were carried out under the direction of the higher priesthood, which comprehends all the duties and authorities of the lesser." (*Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon, Vol. 1*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1987, [11th Printing, 1999], 31).

1 Nephi 2:8,

8 And it came to pass that he [Lehi] called the name of the river, Laman, and it emptied into the Red Sea; and the valley was in the borders, near the mouth thereof.

The river is named Laman by his father, "that [he] mightest be like unto this river, continually running into the

fountain of all righteousness!" (1 Nephi 2:9). Lemuel is to be like "this valley, firm and steadfast, and immovable in keeping the commandments of the Lord!" (1 Nephi 2:10).

This reference to Laman and Lemuel comes suddenly to the novice reader for little is known regarding Laman and Lemuel at this point. In an effort to bring clarity to the reader, Nephi provides the following explanation.

1 Nephi 2:11-12

11 Now this he spake because of the stiffneckedness of Laman and Lemuel; for behold they did murmur in many things against their father, because he was a visionary man, and had led them out of the land of Jerusalem, to leave the land of their inheritance, and their gold, and their silver, and their precious things, to perish in the wilderness. And this they said he had done because of the foolish imaginations of his heart.

12 And thus Laman and Lemuel, being the eldest, did murmur against their father. And they did murmur because they knew not the dealings of that God who had created them.

We are just "three days out of Jerusalem," and Laman and Lemuel continue to make known their feelings regarding the journey. One can only imagine that it has not been just three days of complaining and resentment, but that they had made known their feelings from the beginning. Laman and Lemuel are unwilling travelers. Their hearts and desires are set upon their lives and friends in Jerusalem who, like themselves, are focused on the world, with no room for the spiritual in their lives. It appears that "knew not the dealings of that God who had created them" (1 Nephi 2:12), nor were they desirous of knowing his ways.

But now their feelings go beyond complaining and resentment. Their feelings were like many of those in Jerusalem.

1 Nephi 2:13

13 Neither did they believe that Jerusalem, that great city, could be destroyed according to the words of the prophets. And they were like unto the Jews who were at

Jerusalem, who sought to take away the life of my father.

Lehi seeks guidance from the Lord as he speaks to his rebellious sons.

1 Nephi 2:14

14 And it came to pass that my father did speak unto them in the valley of Lemuel, with power, being filled with the Spirit, until their frames did shake before him. And he did confound them, that they durst not utter against him; wherefore, they did as he commanded them.

As Lehi spoke directly to his sons, they felt the power of the spirit as it shook their very frames, and confounded them in their arguments of opposition. It had such a powerful effect, that for a while, they were obedient to his directions.

George Reynolds and Janne M. Sjodahl state,

"Verse 11. *Murmured in many things against their father.* Here begins a tragic story of the rebellion of children against their parents. The future history of Nephites and Lamanites, with its wars and contentions, bloodshed and destruction, is here seen, as it were in the embryo from which it was developed." (*Commentary on the Book of Mormon, Vol. 1.* Edited and arranged by Philip C. Reynolds. Salt Lake City: Deseret Press, 1955, [1976], 27).

1 Nephi 2:16-17

16 And it came to pass that I, Nephi, being exceedingly young, nevertheless being large in stature, and also having great desires to know of the mysteries of God, wherefore, I did cry unto the Lord; and behold he did visit me, and did soften my heart that I did believe all the words which had been spoken by my father; wherefore, I did not rebel against him like unto my brothers.

17 And I spake unto Sam, making known unto him the things which the Lord had manifested unto me by his Holy Spirit. And it came to pass that he believed in my words.

This is a pivotal moment in Nephi's life and a powerful lesson for each of us. Nephi, like Lamen and Lemuel, did not know, but he wanted to know if his father was inspired of the Lord. Instead of murmuring and complaining like his brothers, he went to the Lord in humility, believing that he would receive an answer to a prayer uttered in faith. The confirmation came, his heart was softened, and he knew by the whispering of the Spirit that his father was inspired of the Lord. All the doubt and hesitation he may have held regarding the journey and his father's words were gone. He now knew for himself. It can be the same for us when we are struggling to know if our leaders are speaking for God. We can be expressive regarding our doubts and criticism, or we can go to the Lord in prayer, that we might know the truth for ourselves. If we ask in faith, sincere in our desire to know the truth, the answer will come.

Upon obtaining his answer, he goes to his brother Sam and shares his experience. Sam listens carefully to his younger brothers words and then, following the prompting of the Spirit, seeks his own confirmation.

After speaking with Sam, Nephi now shares his experience with his brothers, Lamen and Lemuel. But, "behold Lamen and Lemuel would not hearken unto my words" (1 Nephi 2:18).

Nephi now approaches the Lord in humble prayer. He receives the following confirmation: (1) The Lord is pleased because he has sought him with diligence and humility; (2) If he keeps the commandments, he shall be blessed; (3) He "shall be led to a land of promise;...a land which I have prepared for you;...a land which is choice about all other lands"; (4) If his brothers continue to rebel, they will lose the spirit to guide them; (5) If he continues to be obedient, he "shalt be made a ruler and a teacher over thy brethren; (6) If they [brethren] continue to be rebellious, they will receive a curse, "even a sore curse, and they shall have no power over thy seed except they shall rise up against the teachings of the Lord; and (7) If the followers of Nephi rebel against the Lord, those who follow his brothers "shall be a scourge unto...[his] seed, to stir them up to remembrance" (1 Nephi 2:19-24).

The above verses (1 Nephi 2:19-24), contain promises that will be fulfilled both to the blessing and detriment of the the individual or group. The words: diligent, humility,

blessed, choice land, rebel, lose spirit, obedient, curse and scourge will alert you to important lessons to be learned as we proceed with our study.

III. 1 Nephi 3-4

Lehi calls his family together and tells them that the Lord has directed that the brothers return to Jerusalem. He then tells them they are to secure the records of Laban.

1 Nephi 3:3-4

3 For behold, Laban hath the record of the Jews and also a genealogy of my forefathers, and they are engraven upon plates of brass.

4 Wherefore, the Lord hath commanded me that thou and thy brothers should go unto the house of Laban, and seek the records, and bring them down hither into the wilderness.

When he previously told Laman and Lemuel, their reaction was, "it is a hard thing which I have required of them" (1 Nephi 3:5). Their attitude is predicable, especially in view of their absence of belief regarding spiritual communication. They would naturally view his request as rising from yet another strange dream of their deranged father. One must understand the reality of task is daunting. Laban is a powerful man with many servants. He likely will be reluctant to hand over the records, even with compensation. But to Laman and Lemuel, it was just another strange dream of their father they had fulfill. Lehi assured them that the directive comes from the Lord, not himself. (See 1 Nephi 3:5.) Lehi, in speaking to Nephi, tells him "thou shalt be favored of the Lord, because thou hast not murmured" (1 Nephi 3:6).

Nephi responds to his father.

1 Nephi 3:7

7 ...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.

It is true that our belief shapes our attitude. If we know that request comes from the Lord, we are more apt to "go and do." If we do not know or do not believe the task is from the Lord, we are hesitant to comply. We may even seek for reasons not to do as we have been asked, including complaining about how difficult the task is that we have been given to do.

The sons set forth on their task with obvious differences among them regarding their ability to succeed. As they near Jerusalem, they decide to "cast lots" [random selection based entirely on chance] in order to determine who will speak to Laban. The lot or choice falls to Laman.

Laman goes to Laban's home. He sits with Laban and expresses his desire to obtain the records which also "contained the genealogy of...[his] father" (1 Nephi 3:12).

Laman's response is one of alarm and accusation. He states,

1 Nephi 3:13

13 And behold, it came to pass that Laban was angry, and thrust him out from his presence; and he would not that he should have the records. Wherefore, he said unto him: Behold thou art a robber, and I will slay thee.

Laman flees the home and rejoins his brothers. It is enough for Laman and Lemuel as they did not want to come in the first place, now want to return to their father. Nephi states that he was "exceedingly sorrowful" regarding the desire of his two older brother to return without the records. (see 1 Nephi 3:14.)

Nephi responds.

1 Nephi 3:15-16

15 But behold I said unto them that: As the Lord liveth, and as we live, we will not go down unto our father in the wilderness until we have accomplished the thing which the Lord hath commanded us.
16 Wherefore, let us be faithful in keeping the commandments of the Lord;...

Nephi now presents a plan as to how they may obtain the records and why they should not quit now. His plan is to go to their home and get the treasures including gold and silver which they had left behind and offer it to Laban in exchange for the records. He begins by reminding his brothers that Jerusalem is going to be destroyed because of their wickedness and they had rejected the words of the prophets. In fact, if their father had not heeded the direction of the Lord, as a family, they would have perished also. (See 1 Nephi 3:16-18.) He then tells them of the value of the records to them.

1 Nephi 3:19-20

**19 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;
20 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.**

The value of the records is to preserve the language and to have "the words which have been spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets" (1 Nephi 3:20), in other words, so that they will have the scriptures to guide and bless their lives.

His brothers are persuaded. They obtain the riches from their home and all go to the home of Laban. They now offer Laban an exchange of their riches for the records he held. Laban responds.

1 Nephi 3:25-26

**25 And it came to pass that when Laban saw our property, and that it was exceedingly great, he did lust after it, insomuch that he thrust us out, and sent his servants to slay us, that he might obtain our property.
26 And it came to pass that we did flee before the servants of Laban, and we were obliged to leave behind our property, and it fell into the hands of Laban.**

The brothers had succeeded in eluding capture and death by Laban's servants, by hiding in a cave. However, once they

were safe, Laman, with Lemuel's support, could not control his anger toward Nephi and his father. "Wherefore Laman and Lemuel did speak many hard words unto us, their younger brothers, and they did smite us even with a rod." (1 Nephi 3:28).

Laman's fear caused by almost being killed over something that he did not believe in, turns first to harsh words towards his brothers and then to physical abuse. He himself feels no responsibility for agreeing to come and instead seeks to vent his displeasure on his brothers. It is while he is in the process of striking his brothers with a rod, that an angel of the Lord appears with a message to both Laman and Lemuel.

1 Nephi 3:29-30

29 ...behold, an angel of the Lord came and stood before them, saying: Why do ye smite your younger brother with a rod? Know ye not that the Lord hath chosen him to be a ruler over you, and this because of your iniquities? Behold ye shall go up to Jerusalem again, and the Lord will deliver Laban into your hands.
30 And after the angel had spoken unto us, he departed.

The Lord sends one of his angels to protect his servants who are diligently trying to obtain the records as the Lord had directed their father. Instead of supporting the Lord's will, Laman was trying to end it. As a result of their continued disobedience to the Lord's commandments, Nephi, their younger brother, would become the ruler over them! He also confirmed to all that, through the Lord's intervention, they would succeed in getting the records.

1 Nephi 3:31

31 And after the angel had departed, Laman and Lemuel again began to murmur, saying: How is it possible that the Lord will deliver Laban into our hands? Behold, he is a mighty man, and he can command fifty, yea, even he can slay fifty; then why not us?

There are those who make their judgments of the world based only upon what they can see. Their controlling forces are might and strength, which equals power. Therefore, he who has the most power rules over others. Laman, therefore,

concludes in face of Laban and his fifty, what chance do the four of them stand against him? For them the numbers did not add up for success. While there are those who would fully agree with Laman and Lemuel's formulation, Nephi is not one of them.

1 Nephi 4:1-3

1 ...I spake unto my brethren, saying: Let us go up again unto Jerusalem, and let us be faithful in keeping the commandments of the Lord; for behold he is mightier than all the earth, then why not mightier than Laban and his fifty, yea, or even than his tens of thousands?

2 Therefore let us go up; let us be strong like unto Moses; for he truly spake unto the waters of the Red Sea and they divided hither and thither, and our fathers came through, out of captivity, on dry ground, and the armies of Pharaoh did follow and were drowned in the waters of the Red Sea.

3 Now behold ye know that this is true; and ye also know that an angel hath spoken unto you; wherefore can ye doubt? Let us go up; the Lord is able to deliver us, even as our fathers, and to destroy Laban, even as the Egyptians.

To go forward in faith is a position of trust that those who believe have come to know brings results. They have had sufficient experience with the Lord that their initial faith in Him has been strengthened. Frequently, this has included experiencing the promptings of the Holy Ghost as they have proceeded. As their faith has increased, they have reached a point where even what they cannot rationally explain to others, they've come to know to be true. Nephi knew by his faith they could obtain the records. The words of the angel only confirmed his faith. Laman and Lemuel were lacking in faith, therefore, the words of the angel had little meaning to them. Their appraisal of the circumstances was based solely upon man's intellect, rather than God's guidance. For as they later stated, "the Lord maketh no such thing known unto us" (1 Nephi 15:9).

Despite their lack of faith, Laman and Lemuel did accompany their brother "until they came to the walls of Jerusalem" (1 Nephi 4:4). Nephi now proceeded to obtain the desired records alone, but not alone.

1 Nephi 4:6

6 And I was led by the Spirit, not knowing beforehand the things which I should do.

He acted, guided only by his faith. He he did not rationally know how he was going to accomplish his errand.

1 Nephi 4:7-8

**7 Nevertheless I went forth, and as I came near unto the house of Laban I beheld a man, and he had fallen to the earth before me, for he was drunken with wine.
8 And when I came to him I found that it was Laban.**

Here was Laban. And in a incapacitated condition. The very person who had prevented them from obtaining the records was now lying before Nephi in the street. What was he to do next?

1 Nephi 4:10

10 And it came to pass that I was constrained by the Spirit that I should kill Laban; but I said in my heart: Never at any time have I shed the blood of man. And I shrunk and would that I might not slay him.

Nephi had not previously considered that it would be necessary for him to kill Laban. Yet thought this was the directive of the Spirit, he hesitated.

1 Nephi 4:11-12

**11 And the Spirit said unto me again: Behold the Lord hath delivered him into thy hands. Yea, and I also knew that he had sought to take away mine own life; yea, and he would not hearken unto the commandments of the Lord; and he also had taken away our property.
12 And it came to pass that the Spirit said unto me again: Slay him, for the Lord hath delivered him into thy hands.**

The Lord now tells Nephi why the death of Laban is justified and why it is not considered murder.

1 Nephi 4:13

13 Behold the Lord slayeth the wicked to bring forth his righteous purposes. It is better that one man should perish than that a nation should dwindle and perish in unbelief.

There are times when the death of an individual is justified in the eyes of the Lord. In this situation, the Lord alone has complete knowledge of the consequences that will occur if the records are not obtained and the effect it will have upon a nation of people. It is for this reason I believe, He gives Nephi his directive.

1 Nephi 4:18

18 Therefore I did obey the voice of the Spirit, and took Laban by the hair of the head, and I smote off his head with his own sword.

Now Nephi puts on Laban clothes and sword and proceeds to Laban's home. There, he meets Laban's servant, who had the keys to the treasury where the records were kept. He commanded him, in Laban's voice, to go with him to the treasury. (See 1 Nephi 4:19-20.)

Nephi obtains the records and then directs Laban's servant that "he should follow me" (1 Nephi 4:25).

1 Nephi 4:26

26 And he supposing that I spake of the brethren of the church, and that I was truly that Laban whom I had slain, wherefore he did follow me.

As they near the spot where his brothers are waiting, Nephi's brothers also assume that he is Laban and that he had killed Nephi and had come to take away their lives. They began to run away. Nephi calls to them and they stop. However, as they return, the servant trembles and then is about to flee and return to Jerusalem. Nephi, because of his strength, prevents him and then speaks to him directly.

1 Nephi 4:32-33

32 And it came to pass that I spake with him, that if he would hearken unto my words, as the Lord liveth,

and as I live, even so that if he would hearken unto our words, we would spare his life.

33 And I spake unto him, even with an oath, that he need not fear; that he should be a free man like unto us if he would go down in the wilderness with us.

Hugh Nibley states,

"...the oath is the one thing that is most sacred and inviolable among the desert people and their descendants: 'Hardly will an Arab break his oath, even if his life be in jeopardy,' for 'there is nothing stronger, and nothing more sacred than the oath among the nomads.' And even the city Arabs, if it be exacted under special conditions. 'The taking of an oath is a holy thing with the Bedouins, says one authority, 'Wo to him who swears falsely; his social standing will be damaged and his reputation ruined. No one will receive his testimony, and he must also pay a money fine.'

"But not every oath will do. To be most binding and solemn an oath should be by the *life* of something, even if be but a blade of grass. The only oath more awful than 'by my life' or (less commonly) 'by the life of my head,' is the wa hayat Allah 'by the life of God,' or 'as the Lord Liveth,' the exact Arabic equivalent of the ancient Hebrew *hai Elohim*...

"So we see that the only way Nephi could possibly have pacified the struggling Zoram [Laban's servant] in an instant was to utter the one oath that no man would dream of breaking, the most solemn of all oaths to the Semite: 'As the Lord liveth, and I live!' (An Approach to the Book of Mormon, Vol.6. Salt Lake City and Provo: Deseret Book Co., and Foundation for Ancient Records and Mormon Studies, 1957, [Third Edition, 1988], 129).

Bryan Richards states,

"Some critics of the Book of Mormon have contended that there should have been some record of the departure of Lehi's family in the Bible. Nephi makes it clear that their departure was in secret. Mormon reaffirmed this, 'he brought our fathers out of the land of Jerusalem, (and no one knew it save it were himself (Lehi) and those whom he brought out of that land)' (3 Ne. 5:20). This was

especially important after Nephi had killed Laban. If others had known about their departure [from Zoram?], they would have been (correctly) blamed for Laban's death and been brought to justice."

www.gospeldoctrine.com/content/1Ne4).

1 Nephi 4:36

36 Now we were desirous that he [Zoram] should tarry with us for this cause, that the Jews might not know concerning our flight into the wilderness, lest they should pursue us and destroy us.

IV. 1 Nephi 5

Laman and Lemuel are not the only ones who have doubted Lehi's vision requiring the family to depart from Jerusalem. Sariah, Lehi's wife, also has had her doubts. These doubts became especially acute when her sons did not return within the time period that she expected.

1 Nephi 5:2-3

2 For she [Sariah] had supposed that we had perished in the wilderness; and she had also complained against my father, telling him that he was a visionary man; saying: Behold thou hast led us forth from the land of our inheritance, and my sons are no more, and we perish in the wilderness.

3 And after this manner of language had my mother complained against my father.

Each of us have limits to our faith. Sariah was no different. The circumstances were not ideal, especially for one who is not accustomed to living in a tent in the wilderness; never mind leaving the conveniences of her home in a city surrounded by friends and relatives. This was not to be a weekend adventure. Her tipping point was reached when the death of her four sons became a real possibility. Her husband offers her these words of encouragement and comfort.

1 Nephi 5:4-6

4 And it had come to pass that my father spake unto her, saying: I know that I am a visionary man; for if

I had not seen the things of God in a vision I should not have known the goodness of God, but had tarried at Jerusalem, and had perished with my brethren.

5 But behold, I have obtained a land of promise, in the which things I do rejoice; yea, and I know that the Lord will deliver my sons out of the hands of Laban, and bring them down again unto us in the wilderness.

6 And after this manner of language did my father, Lehi, comfort my mother, Sariah,...

For Sariah, her husband's words were enough for now. She knew that Jerusalem was going to be destroyed. The people had become so wicked that they wanted to kill the prophets, including her beloved Lehi. She would continue to seek strength from the Lord and trust in the words of her husband as she continued to wait.

Finally the day came and her sons were home once again. With them was a new fellow named Zoram, along with the desired sacred records. The trip, though full of adventure, had been a success.

1 Nephi 5:8-9

8 And she spake, saying: Now I know of a surety that the Lord hath commanded my husband to flee into the wilderness; yea, and I also know of a surety that the Lord hath protected my sons, and delivered them out of the hands of Laban, and given them power whereby they could accomplish the thing which the Lord hath commanded them. And after this manner of language did she speak.

9 And it came to pass that they did rejoice exceedingly, and did offer sacrifice and burnt offerings unto the Lord; and they gave thanks unto the God of Israel.

Sariah's faith had been strengthened. She now knew that her husband was inspired of the Lord and he had been commanded to take his family into the wilderness. The Lord had promised to protect her sons and he had done so. It was a time of rejoicing and humble gratitude for the Lord's kindness.

Lehi is excited to view the brass plates and to learn their content.

1 Nephi 5:11-14, 16

11 And he beheld that they did contain the five books of Moses, which gave an account of the creation of the world, and also of Adam and Eve, who were out first parents;

12 And also a record of the Jews from the beginning, even down to the commencement of the reign of Zedekiah, king of Judah;

13 And also the prophecies of the holy prophets, from the beginning, even down to the commencement of the reign of Zedekiah; and also many prophecies which have been spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah.

14...Lehi, also found upon the plates of brass a genealogy of his fathers; wherefore he knew that he was a descendent of Joseph; yea, even that Joseph who was the son of Jacob, who was sold into Egypt...

16 And thus my father, Lehi, did discover the genealogy of his fathers. And Laban also was a descendant of Joseph, wherefore he and his fathers had kept the records.

These scriptures will be invaluable to the Nephites as they proceed in their journey toward the land of promise. They will continue to provide a foundation upon which they build their relationship with God. Without these records, they would be like a ship without a rudder, unable to successfully steer their way through the challenges and adversity that yet awaits them. It is the scriptures that will serve to build and strengthen their faith. Now Lehi prophesied regarding the plates of brass.

1 Nephi 5:18-19

18 That these plates of brass should go forth unto all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people who were of his seed.

19 Wherefore, he said that these plates of brass should never perish; neither should they be dimmed any more by time. And he prophesied many things concerning his seed.

Orson Pratt states,

"These plates of brass, contained the prophecies of all the holy Prophets from the beginning—from the days of Adam, hence they must have contained the prophecies of Enoch, Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph of Egypt. The prophecies of Isaiah and many others of the holy Prophets were contained upon these plates of brass.

"The Prophet said that these plates of brass should not be dimmed by time, that God would preserve them to the latest generations. What for? In order that they might come forth and their contents be translated by the Urim and Thummim, that these contents might be declared to all nations, and kindreds, and tongues, and people, who were the descendants of Lehi upon the face of all this continent, from the frozen regions of the north to the very utmost extremities of South America." (*Journal of Discourses, Vol. 16*. London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1874, 55).

V. 1 Nephi 6

1 Nephi 6:1-3

1 And now I, Nephi, do not give the genealogy of my fathers in this part of my record;...
2 For it sufficeth me to say that we are descendants 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 cannot be written upon these plates, for I desire the room that I may write of the things of God.

The plates were not to be genealogical records, even of Nephi's family. They do not contain all that his father had written in his record. His purpose was to "write of the things of God" (1 Nephi 6:3).

Nephi continues.

1 Nephi 6:4-5

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.

The God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob is Jehovah.

JST, Exodus 6:3

3 And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob. I am the Lord God Almighty; the Lord JEHOVAH. And was not my name known unto them?

The Lord JEHOVAH of the Old Testament is name of the pre-mortal Jesus Christ, who is the Son of God. He was given the responsibility by God his Father, to come to earth and be the Savior of all mankind. Nephi is stating, I am writing this record for the purpose of persuading men to come unto Christ. If they will receive the ordinances of salvation including faith, repentance, baptism, and the gift of the Holy Ghost; make and keep sacred covenants, and remain true and loyal until their mortal probation is finished, they will gain salvation.

Hugh Nibley states,

"[Nephi] tells us he is going to give us an abbreviated account. [He then quotes 1 Nephi 6:5]. That's important. The Book of Mormon is not to be peddled for entertainment or TV fare. It's not meant to be diverting. Mark Twain said, 'It's simply chloroform in print.' Most people can't even get through it; they think it's the dullest book in the world. We know it's anything but that, but it isn't written as a best seller. It isn't written for the sake of the story or the thrills...When you pick up the Book of Mormon, you [have to] shift your mind into another gear..." (*Teachings of the Book of Mormon Semester 1*. Transcripts of lectures presented to an Honors Book of Mormon Class at Brigham Young University 1988-1990. Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormons Studies, 1993, 166).

VI. 1 Nephi 7

The Lord speaks to Lehi again giving him further directions regarding his family.

1 Nephi 7:1-2

1...it came to pass that the Lord spake unto him again, saying that it was not meet for him, Lehi, that he should take his family into the wilderness alone; but that his sons should take daughters to wife, that they might raise up seed unto the Lord in the land of promise.

2 And it came to pass that the Lord commanded him that I, Nephi, and my brethren, should again return unto the land of Jerusalem, and bring down Ishmael and his family into the wilderness.

One can imagine that even Laman and Lemuel would be excited to make the return trip. Its purpose is not to obtain records, but to gain wives for their journey. Sariah would have also been excited, for with wives, comes the potential for grandchildren.

1 Nephi 7:4-5

4 And it came to pass that we went up unto the house of Ishmael, and we did gain favor in the sight of Ishmael, insomuch that we did speak unto him the words of the Lord.

5 And it came to pass that the Lord did soften the heart of Ishmael, and also his household, insomuch that they took their journey with us down into the wilderness to the tent of our father.

How many were there in Ishmael's family?

Erastus Snow stated in Logan, Utah, May 6, 1882,

"The prophet Joseph informed us that the record of Lehi was contained on the 116 pages that were first translated and subsequently stolen, and of which an abridgment is given us in the First Book of Nephi, which is the record of Nephi individually, he himself being of the lineage of Manasseh; but that Ishmael was of the lineage of Ephraim, and that his sons married into Lehi's family, and Lehi's sons married Ishmael's daughters." (*Journal of Discourses, Vol. 23*. London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1883, 184).

D. Kelly Ogden states,

"From the above quotation [Erastus Snow] and from 1 Nephi 7:6 we may propose that two of Ishmael's sons had married daughters of Lehi and Sariah. That would mean that the two families were already related by marriage, which might explain Lehi's seeming nonchalance about instructing his sons to bring Ishmael's family down into the wilderness. There might already have been marriage plans between the two families—only the setting for the ceremonies would now have to change from the city to the desert. Another reason why Ishmael's family in particular was elected to join Lehi's was that Ishmael had five unmarried daughters; the four sons of Lehi along with Zoram would in time marry Ishmael's daughters—a perfect five-way match set up in advance by the Lord.

"The Lord had now warned at least eighteen people to flee from the wrath to come over Jerusalem: Lehi, Sariah, Laman, Lemuel, Sam, Nephi, Zoram, Ishmael, his wife, five daughters, and two sons with their wives. (We do not know, but there may also have been children from the latter four.)" ("Answering the Lord's Call," in *Studies in Scripture: 1 Nephi to Alma 29*, Vol. 7. Edited by Kent P. Jackson. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1987, [Second printing, January 1988], 30-31).

If one thought that this was going to be a rather enjoyable and uneventful journey, they would be mistaken. Being so close to Jerusalem and then having to leave it again, was more than Laman and Lemuel could bear.

1 Nephi 7:6-7

6 And it came to pass that as we journeyed in the wilderness, behold Laman and Lemuel, and two of the daughters of Ishmael, and the two sons of Ishmael and their families, did rebel against us; yea, against me, Nephi, and Sam, and their father, Ishmael, and his wife, and his three other daughters.

7 And it came to pass in the which rebellion, they were desirous to return unto the land of Jerusalem.

The reader may safely assume that the party had left the home of Ishmael and were returning to join Lehi and Sariah when the rebellion occurred. The listing of Laman and Lemuel's names first and the fact that Nephi directed his

words of counsel directly to them, supports that they were the ringleaders of the rebellion. Like Lot's wife who had left Sodom with her family, but could not really bear to leave her life there, turned to return, likewise Laman and Lemuel also sought to return to Jerusalem. They enlisted the support of two of Ishmael's daughters, as well as two of Ishmael's sons and their families as participants.

Nephi will speak to the group, but specifically to his two older brothers. These are his points of admonition: (1) "How is it that you are so hard in your hearts, and so blind in your minds that I have need [to]...speak unto you,...and set an example for you?" (1 Nephi 7:8); (2) [Why] have ye not hearkened unto the word of the Lord? (1 Nephi 7:9); (3) [Have] ye forgotten...ye have seen an angel of the Lord? (1 Nephi 7:10); (4) "How is it you have forgotten what great things the Lord has done for us..." (1 Nephi 7:11); (5) "How is it that ye have forgotten that the Lord is able to do all things according to his will, for the children of men, if it so be that they exercise faith in him?" (1 Nephi 7:12). Nephi gives to his brothers his concluding statement.

1 Nephi 7:15

15 Now behold, I say unto you that if ye will return unto Jerusalem ye shall also perish with them. And now, if you have choice, go up to the land, and remember the words which I speak unto you, that if ye go ye will also perish; for thus the Spirit of the Lord constraineth me that I should speak.

Nephi has provided his brothers five reasons why they should not return to the land of Jerusalem as they desire. Recognizing their agency, he provides a warning given to them by the Spirit. Were they sensitive to the spirit themselves, they would recognize by his words, his genuine concern for their well-being. They do not. They are void of the spirit and have chosen to follow the bidding of another master.

1 Nephi 7:16

16 And it came to pass that when I, Nephi, had spoken these words unto my brethren, they were angry with me. And it came to pass that they did lay their hands upon me, for behold, they were exceeding wroth, and they

did bind me with cords, for they sought to take away my life, that they might leave me in the wilderness to be devoured by wild beasts.

Rodney Turner observes,

"...in spite of all they were taught, Laman, the archvillain, and his tag-along brother Lemuel emerge as fundamentally corrupt men. Their record was dismal: they were materialistic, faithless, disloyal, cowardly, complaining, cruel, lazy, untruthful, and, like Jacob's son Reuben, 'unstable as water' (Genesis 49:4)—humbling themselves one day and breathing out threats the next (1 Nephi 7:20; 16:5, 32, 39; 18:4, 15, 20). The only thing that really impressed them was power (1 Nephi 18:20). Above all, they were would-be murderers of their own father and brother. In the end, they polluted their posterity with their lies and brought a curse upon them was not to be removed for more than a half a millennium.

"On the other hand, Nephi was a man of astonishing faith, profound humility, and consistent steadiness. In the latter, he was unequaled even by his parents...why the striking contrast between Nephi and his two brothers? Was one so good, and the others so bad? Is it a case of self-serving manipulation of the facts on Nephi's part?" Hardly. If anything, Nephi has moderated his own virtues. I believe that Nephi and Laman symbolize that essential opposition between good and evil drawn so vividly in the Book of Mormon. They represent the two extremes found therein: life versus death, heaven versus hell, the kingdom of God versus the kingdom of the devil, the spiritually minded versus the carnally minded, the saved versus the lost—those sealed up to Christ and those sealed up to the devil (Alma 34:34-36; 40:23-26)." ("The Prophet Nephi," in *The Book of Mormon: First Nephi, The Doctrinal Foundation*. Edited by Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate, Jr. Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1988, 82-83).

Nephi's response to his brothers binding him is to offer a prayer unto the Lord, not to smite them, but that "I may burst these bands with which I am bound" (1 Nephi 7:18).

With his bands burst, Nephi speaks to his brothers again. We are not told the essence of his words, but the response of his brothers is unchanged. "And it came to pass that

they were angry with me again, and sought to lay hands upon me;" (1 Nephi 7:19).

Their actions toward Nephi are more than those in the party can bear and "one of the daughters of Ishmael, yea, and also her mother, and one of the sons of Ishmael did plead with my brethren, insomuch that they did soften their hearts; and they did cease striving to take away my life" (1 Nephi 7:19).

Without the previous support they had enjoyed, they experienced a moment of humility.

1 Nephi 7:20-21

20 And it came to pass that they were sorrowful, because of their wickedness, insomuch that they did bow down before me, and did plead with me that I would forgive them of the thing that they had done against me.

21 And it came to pass that I did frankly forgive them all that they had done, and I did exhort them that they would pray unto the Lord their God for forgiveness. And it came to pass that they did so...

For a moment in time, Laman and Lemuel felt the spirit of the Lord upon them, their hearts softened, and they sought forgiveness for their actions toward their brother. How valid was their repentance? Like the speeder, who exceeding the posted speed, is pulled over by the policeman. They are humble and contrite for their actions. However, whether the individual's repentance is real or momentary, depends on how obedient they are to the speed limit, after the policeman has driven away. So it is with each of us. Are we obedient only when we are caught in our disobedience, or do we strive to be obedient at all times, and under all circumstances? I believe that the degree of forgiveness Laman and Lemuel obtained, like for each of us, depends both upon our sincerity and the length of our resolve.

The closing words of this chapter are significant.

1 Nephi 7:22

22 ...And after I and my brethren and all the house of Ishmael had come down unto the tent of my father, they

did give thanks unto the Lord their God; and they did offer sacrifices and burnt offerings unto him.

There will be time for refreshment and a wilderness wedding later, but first an expression of gratitude for divine guidance.

VII. Conclusions

As we have begun our reading of the initial chapters of the Book of Mormon, we had been taught important lessons.

In Chapter 1, we learned that God speaks to prophets and gives them important guidance, both for the people and themselves. Lehi heeded the words of the Lord, and the people of Jerusalem were warned regarding their pending destruction. If they had heeded the counsel, they would have been saved. You will recall that when Jonah called Ninevah to repent, as a result of their wickedness, the people repented and the city was spared. (see Jonah 3:10.) Lehi and his family heeded the Lord's direction, and left Jerusalem. Their lives were spared.

In Chapter 2, we learned that how we receive the words of a prophet is important individually. Nephi did not know if his father's words were from the Lord so, in faith, he sought the Lord's guidance. His prayer was answered and it gave him great strength.

His older brothers, Laman and Lemuel, also doubted the words of their father. However, they did not seek guidance from the Lord. They lacked the necessary faith to even pray. Instead, they just complained.

In Chapter 3, we learn that even if we do what the Lord asks us to do, it may not be easy. If we persevere, the Lord will bless our efforts. Twice the brothers sought to receive the records from Laban. Twice he refused. The second time, he kept the treasures that were offered and also sent his servants to take the lives of the brothers.

After the first effort failed, the two oldest brothers were ready to quit. When their second effort ended, Laman and Lemuel were angry and even physically abused their younger brothers. It took the appearance of an angel for them to stop. The angel also gave assurance their next effort would be successful.

We learn in Chapter 4, that when we have done all that we can, the Lord will bless our efforts. Nephi was determined to secure the records, even though he did not know how he was going to accomplish it. The Lord blessed him. Even though Laban lost his life, a nation was saved for the records and scriptures were obtained.

In Chapter 5, we learned that all of us, even the faithful, have periods of doubt. If during these periods, we will trust in what we know, and doubt our doubts, strength will come. Nephi's mother, Sariah began to doubt when her sons didn't return when she thought they should. Lehi reminded her what she knew was true, and to trust the Lord, and her faith was strengthened.

The purpose of the Book of Mormon was reinforced to us in Chapter 6. It is to bring us to Christ. The record, by design, contains only those things that are, according to Nephi, "pleasing unto God and unto those who are not of the world" (1 Nephi 6:5).

Finally Chapter 7, reminds us that even though a task given by the Lord may be important, it may not be easy to accomplish. The return of the brothers to bring Ishmael and his family on the journey was desirous for they would then have wives with whom they could share their lives. It also meant confronting those who wanted to return to Jerusalem who did not believe it was going to be destroyed.

One of the most familiar verses in the Book of Mormon, besides "and it came to pass," are the words found in 1 Nephi 3:7, "I will go and do."

Jeffrey R. Holland observe, after quoting 1 Nephi 3:7,

"I confess that I wince a little when I hear that promise quoted so casually among us [LDS members]. Jesus knew what that kind of commitment would entail and so now does Nephi. And so will a host of others before it is over. That vow took Christ to the cross on Calvary and it remains at the heart of every Christian covenant. 'I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded?' Well, we shall see." ("The Will of the Father in All Things," in *On Earth as it is in Heaven*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1989, 129-130).

The Book of Mormon is about families and individuals. Some are obedient and faithful; others are not, but each have a lesson to teach us. If we are faithful, we will be blessed; if we are not, we will suffer the consequences. Today let us make our decision to leave the wickedness of the world and choose righteousness. If we do so, though the way will not be easy, we will be blessed. That is the promise of the Lord.

Our next lesson, BM#03, will address another of Lehi's visions. It is entitled, "The Vision of the Tree of Life."