

BM#07 "I Know In Whom I Have Trusted" 2 Nephi 3-5

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I. Introduction

In these chapters, Father Lehi will continue to bless his sons. Through the blessing bestowed upon his son, Joseph, we will learn the role Joseph Smith will play regarding the Book of Mormon. In Chapter 4, known as the Psalm of Nephi, we will learn both the sadness and joy Nephi experienced in trying to live a righteous life. In Chapter 5, Nephi and those who were loyal to him, will separate from his brothers, Laman and Lemuel. Those who follow Nephi will become known as Nephites and those who follow Laman and Lemuel will become known as Lamanites. These two groups will continue throughout the majority of the Book of Mormon.

II. 2 Nephi 3

Chapter 3 begins with Father Lehi giving a blessing to his last-born son, Joseph. You will recall that two sons were born to Lehi and his wife, during their journeying in the wilderness ("the elder was called Jacob and the younger Joseph" 1 Nephi 18:7). From the plates of brass, Lehi had learned the genealogy of his fathers.

1 Nephi 5:14

14 And it came to pass that my father, Lehi, also found upon the plates of brass a genealogy of his fathers; wherefore he knew that he was a descendant of Joseph; yea, even that Joseph who was the son of Jacob, who was sold into Egypt, and who was preserved by the hand of the Lord, that he might preserve his father, Jacob, and all his household from perishing with famine.

Lehi now gives a blessing to his son, Joseph.

2 Nephi 3:4-5

4 For behold, thou art the fruit of my loins; and I am a descendant of Joseph who was carried captive into Egypt. And great were the covenants of the Lord which he made unto Joseph.

5 Wherefore, Joseph truly saw our day. And he obtained a promise of the Lord, that out of the fruit of his loins the Lord God would raise up a righteous branch unto the house of Israel; not the Messiah, but a branch which was to be broken off, nevertheless, to be remembered in the covenants of the Lord that the Messiah should be made manifest unto them in the latter days, in the spirit of power, unto the bringing them out of darkness unto light—yea, out of hidden darkness and out of captivity unto freedom.

Father Lehi spoke to his son Joseph regarding the blessings that were given to Jacob's son, Joseph, who was sold by his brothers into Egypt. Joseph, son of Jacob, was a progenitor of Lehi, and as one of his righteous descendents, Lehi was entitled to the blessings given by God to Joseph. One of the blessings Joseph received was that a branch [his descendents] would be broken off [separated from the main group, but nevertheless remembered]. They would have the blessing of having the Messiah appear to them in the latter days. They would be in spiritual darkness and be brought into the light (truth) and freedom. This may be fulfilled in the appearance of the Resurrected Lord to the Nephites, or his manifestation through the Holy Ghost, to the American Indians in the latter days.

2 Nephi 3:6-8

6 For Joseph truly testified, saying: A seer shall the Lord my God raise up, who shall be a choice seer unto the fruit of my loins.

7 Yea, Joseph truly said: Thus saith the Lord unto me: A choice seer will I raise up out of the fruit of thy loins; and he shall be esteemed highly among the fruit of thy loins. And unto him will I give commandment that he shall do a work for the fruit of thy loins, his brethren, which shall be of great worth unto them, even to the bringing of them to the knowledge of the covenants which I have made with thy fathers.

8 And I will give unto him a commandment that he shall do none other work, save the work which I shall

**command him. And I will make him great in mine eyes;
for he shall do my work.**

This seer [Mosiah 8:16-17] or prophet, which the Lord will raise up in the latter days, will do a great work for the ancestors of Joseph and Lehi and will be of great worth to them. Part of this work will consist of bringing them [their descendents] to a knowledge of the covenants which God has made with their fathers [Abraham, Isaac and Jacob].

Bryan Richards states,

"That 'Joseph truly saw our day' is a conclusion that cannot be drawn from the reading the Old Testament alone. All that is clear from reading Genesis is that Joseph knew that the Lord would deliver the Israelites from Egypt. '...God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob' (Genesis 50:24). Lehi was apparently reading from a version of the Old Testament in which the plain and precious prophecies of Joseph had not been removed. Joseph Smith restored these prophecies in the Joseph Smith Translation for Genesis 50:24-48. In fact, Lehi's discussion of what Joseph saw as contained in 2 Ne. 3:5-18 is very similar to the Joseph Smith Translation for Genesis 50. Lehi was basically repeating the prophecies which had been previously recorded.

"A conclusion which can be drawn from our version of the Old Testament is that Joseph's father, Jacob had seen Lehi's day. This is evident in the patriarchal blessings which Jacob gave to his 12 sons. When speaking to Joseph he said, 'Joseph is a fruitful bough by a well whose branches run over the wall' (Gen 49:22). Lehi's family was this branch which ran over the wall."

www.gosepeldoctrine.com/contents/2Nephi3).

2 Nephi 3:9-11

9 And he shall be great like unto Moses, whom I have said I would raise up unto you, to deliver my people, O house of Israel.

10 And Moses will I raise up to deliver thy people out of the land of Egypt.

11 But a seer will I raise up out of the fruit of thy loins; and unto him will I give power to bring forth my word unto the seed of thy loins—and not to the

bringing forth my word only, said the Lord, but to the convincing them of my word, which shall have already gone forth among them.

Bruce R. McConkie states,

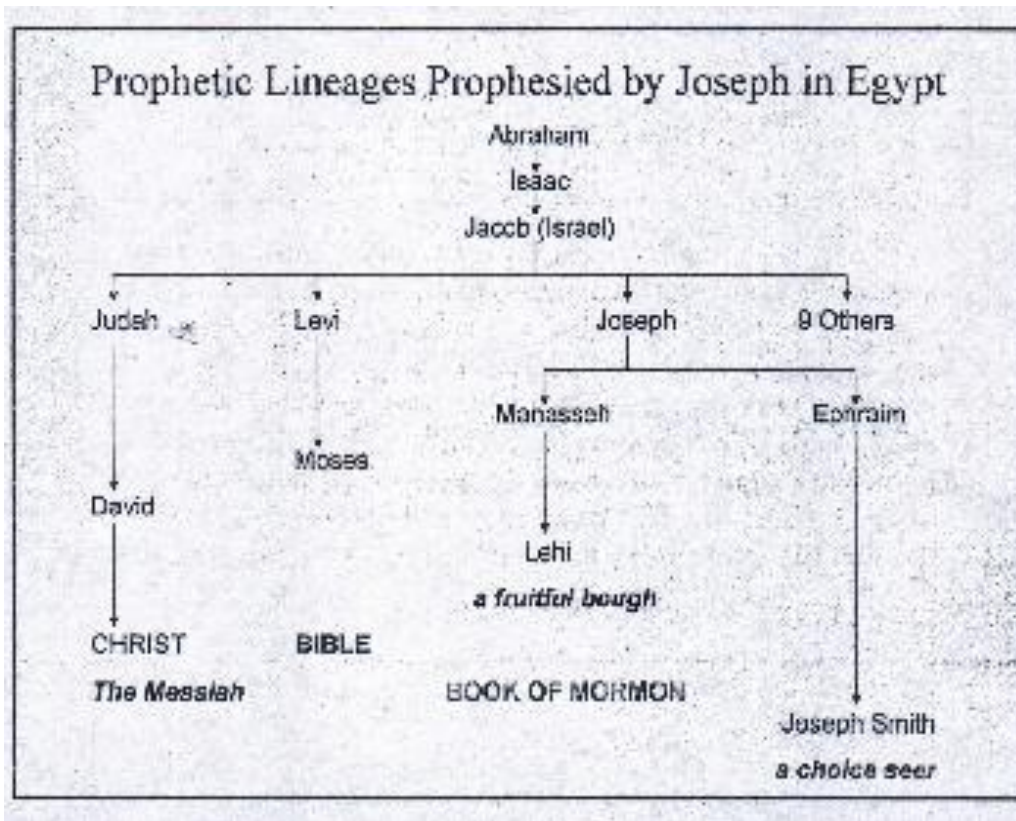
"...the Lord said to Joseph of old: 'I will raise up unto the fruit of thy loins; and I will make for him a spokesman.' As Moses wrote and Aaron proclaimed the law given in the Old World, so someone in the New World, someone of the seed of Joseph, would write the Lord's law, and yet another, a spokesman, would declare it. In this case the writer and the spokesman are not identified by name; rather we are left, based on our knowledge of what has transpired in this and previous dispensations, to identify those whose missions were of such import as to have them revealed thousands of years before the events transpired. Mormon wrote the Book of Mormon, quoting, condensing and summarizing from many ancient records as the Spirit directed. And Joseph Smith translated the ancient word by the gift and power of God and proclaimed it to all men, and to the seed of Joseph in particular, as the mind and will and voice of Him by whom salvation comes.

"With this in mind, note these words of the Lord, 'And I, behold, I will give unto him [Mormon] that he shall write the writing of the fruit of the loins [the Nephites], unto the fruit of thy loins [the Lamanites]; and the spokesman of thy loins [Joseph Smith] shall declare it.' [2 Nephi 3:18]. That is, Mormon wrote the Book of Mormon, but what he wrote was taken from the writings of the Nephite prophets; and these writings, compiled into one book, were translated by Joseph Smith and sent forth by him unto the Lamanites unto whom, as the title page of the Book of Mormon attests, they were originally written. And further, they are sent forth to all the seed of Joseph, whether in the Lamanite branch of Israel or not." (*A New Witness for the Articles of Faith*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1985, 425-426).

Chart 1. Prophetic Lineages Prophesied by Joseph in Egypt.

Reference: Religion 121. Dr. Eric D. Huntsman. *Introduction to the Book of Mormon: 1 Nephi through Alma 29*. Provo: Brigham Young University, Fall, 2007. 10/10/2007).

Through Levi, son of Jacob, comes Moses and the Bible; through Manasseh, son of Joseph, come Lehi and through him the Book of Mormon, and, through Ephraim, son of Joseph, comes Joseph Smith, a choice seer.



Archibald F. Bennett states,

"Joseph Smith Sr., gave this remarkable patriarchal blessing, to his son, the Prophet Joseph Smith: 'I bless thee with...the blessings of thy father Joseph, the son of Jacob. Behold he looked after his posterity in the last days;...he sought diligently to know from whence the son should come who should bring forth the word of the Lord, by which they might be enlightened and brought back to the true fold, and his eyes behold thee, my son; his heart rejoiced and his soul was satisfied and he said; As my blessing are to extend to the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills; as my father's blessing prevailed over the blessings of his progenitors, and my seed are to inherit the choice land where on the Zion of God shall stand in the last days; from among my seed, scattered from the Gentiles, shall a choice Seer arise...

"Thou (Joseph Smith, Jr.) shall hold the keys of this ministry, even the Presidency of this Church, both in time and in eternity, and thou shall stand on Mount Zion when the tribes of Jacob come shouting from the north, and with thy brethren, the Sons of Ephraim, crown them in the name of Jesus Christ." (See Patriarchal Blessings, Book 2, p.5, in *Saviors on Mount Zion*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Sunday School Union Board, 1950, 68).

Brigham Young states,

"It was decreed in the counsels of eternity, long before the foundations of the earth were laid, that he, Joseph Smith, should be the man, in the last dispensation of this world, to bring forth the word of God to the people, and receive the fullness of the keys and power of the Priesthood of the Son of God. The Lord had his eyes upon him, and upon his father, and upon his father's father, and upon their progenitors back to Abraham, and from Abraham to the flood, from the flood to Enoch, and from Enoch to Adam. He has watched that family and that blood as it has circulated from its fountain to the birth of that man. He was fore-ordained in eternity to preside over this last dispensation." (*Discourses of Brigham Young*. Compiled by John A. Widtsoe. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1954, [Edition 1961], 108).

I have offered for your consideration the witness of the scriptures, both the Old Testament and the Book of Mormon; the Patriarchal Blessing given by Joseph Smith Sr. to his son, Joseph Smith, Jr.; and, the testimony of Brigham Young, to confirm that Joseph Smith, Jr., is the progenitor of Joseph, son of Jacob. Joseph Smith, Jr. is the choice seer chosen by the Lord to bring to pass the blessings promised by the Lord to his chosen children.

Joseph, son of Jacob, continues his prophecy as recorded in the Book quoting from the words found in Ezekiel.

<p>Ezekiel 37:16-17</p> <p>16 Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another stick, and write upon</p>	<p>2 Nephi 3:12-13</p> <p>12 Wherefore, the fruit of thy loins shall write; and the fruit of the loins of Judah shall write; and that which shall be written by the fruit of thy loins, and also</p>
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<p>it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel his companions: 17 And join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand.</p>	<p>that which shall be written by the fruit of the loins of Judah, shall grow together</p> <p>unto the confounding of false doctrines and laying down of contentions, and establishing peace among the fruit of thy loins, and bringing them to the knowledge of their fathers in the latter days, and also to the knowledge of my covenants, saith the Lord.</p> <p>13 And out of weakness he shall be made strong, in that day when my work shall commence among all my people, unto the restoring thee, O house of Israel, saith the Lord.</p>
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The stick of Judah is the Bible and the stick of Joseph is the Book of Mormon. The purpose of the stick of Joseph is to stand as Another Testament of Jesus Christ during the latter days. With the Bible, it will act to confound the false doctrine that will be prevalent among the children of men. It also serves to bring the children of scattered Israel to a knowledge of their fathers as well as a knowledge of the covenants of the Lord. (See 2 Nephi 3:12-13).

Joseph, son of Jacob, continues,

2 Nephi 3:14-16

14 And thus prophesied Joseph, saying: Behold, that seer will the Lord bless; and they that seek to destroy him shall be confounded; for this promise, which I have obtained of the Lord, of the fruit of my loins, shall be fulfilled. Behold, I am sure of fulfilling of this promise;

15 And his name shall be called after me; and it shall be after the name of his father. And he shall be like unto me; for the thing, which the Lord shall bring forth by his hand, by the power of the Lord shall bring my people unto salvation.

16 Yea, thus prophesied Joseph: I am sure of this thing, even as I am sure of the promise of Moses; for the Lord hath said unto me, I will preserve thy seed forever.

The seer, according to Joseph, son of Jacob, will be called Joseph, after Joseph, son of Jacob. He will be called after the name of his father, who was called, Joseph Smith, Sr.

Joseph, son of Jacob, states that the seer, "will be like unto me" (2 Nephi 3:15).

Bryan Richards states,

"Joseph of Egypt was a savior to his brethren and father's house who were about to perish in a famine. Joseph Smith was a savior to the scattered of Israel and his family by restoring truths that saved them from spiritual famine. As Amos prophesied, 'Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a famine of water, but of hearing the words of the Lord.'" (Amos 8:11.)

www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/2Nephi3).

Joseph, son of Jacob, also indicated that Joseph the chosen Seer, would also be like Moses.

George Reynolds and Janne M. Sjodahl state,

- "(1) Both saw and spoke with Jehovah.
- (2) Both were liberators who led multitudes in exodus for the sake of liberty from oppression.
- (3) Both were law-givers by divine instruction.
- (4) Both were prophets and seers.
- (5) Both performed mighty miracles.
- (6) Both encountered opposition, from "friends" and enemies.
- (7) Both depended largely on a brother for success: Moses on Aaron; Joseph on Hyrum." (*Commentary on the Book of Mormon, Vol.1*. Edited and arranged by Philip C. Reynolds. Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1955, [1976], 253).

We have the testimony of Father Lehi to his son, Joseph, that "a mighty one...shall [be raised] up...who shall do much good, both in word and deed" (2 Nephi 3:24).

2 Nephi 3:24

24 And there shall rise up one mighty among them, who shall do much good, both in word and in deed, being an instrument in the hands of God, with exceeding faith, to work mighty wonders, and do that thing which is great in the sight of God, unto the bringing to pass much restoration unto the house of Israel, and unto the seed of thy brethren.

These are the words of John Taylor written at the time of Joseph Smith's death.

Doctrine and Covenants 135:3

3 Joseph Smith, the Prophet and Seer of the Lord, has done more, save Jesus only, for the salvation of men in this world, than any other man that ever lived in it. In the short space of twenty years, he has brought forth the Book of Mormon, which he translated by the gift and power of God, and has been the means of publishing it on two continents; has sent the fulness of the everlasting gospel, which it contained, to the four quarters of the earth; has brought forth the revelations and commandments which compose the book of Doctrine and Covenants, and many other wise documents and instructions for the benefit of the children of men; gathered many thousands of the Latter-day Saints, founded a great city, and left a fame and name that cannot be slain. He lived great, and he died great in the eyes of God and his people; and like most of Lord's anointed in ancient times, has sealed his mission and his works with his own blood; and so has his brother Hyrum. In life they were not divided, and in death they were not separated.'

In order to know spiritual truth, it is important for the individual to seek the spirit of the Lord through humble prayer. The Lord has promised that he will make known to the sincere seeker of truth, the truth of his words. This includes a witness of Joseph Smith as his choice seer. (See Moroni 10:4-5).

III. 2 Nephi 4

In the initial four verses of Chapter 4, Lehi blessed the children of Laman, his sons and his daughters and reminded them that whether they will "prosper in the land," or "be cut off from [the Lord's] presence," will be dependent upon the obedience they give to Lord's commandments. Then he offered them the following words, "behold, I know that if ye are brought up in the way ye should go ye will not depart from it. Wherefore, if ye are cursed, behold, I leave my blessing upon you, that the cursing may be taken from you and be answered upon the heads of your parents" (2 Nephi 4:6). With these sacred words, Father Lehi confirmed that parents have the responsibility to teach their children correct principles. If they do not, as parents they will share in their punishment of their children by the Lord.

Gordon B. Hinckley states,

"Parents haven't measured up to their responsibilities. It is evident. A nation will rise no higher than the strength of its homes. If you want to reform a nation, you begin with families, with parents who teach their children principles and values that are positive and affirmative and will lead them to worthwhile endeavors. This is the basic failure that has taken place in America...parents have no greater responsibility in this world than the bringing up of their children in the right way..." ("This Thing Was Not Done In A Corner," in *Ensign*, November 1996, 48-49).

While in the final analysis, the Lord will make the correct judgment, parents are responsible for the correct teaching of their children.

Lehi concludes with this statement to Laman's children.

2 Nephi 4:7

7 Wherefore, because of my blessing the Lord God will not suffer that ye shall perish; wherefore, he will be merciful unto you and unto your seed forever.

Lehi tells Lemuel's children that "thou shalt not utterly be destroyed; but in the end thy seed shall be blessed. Lemuel's greatest fault is that he goes along passively

with the desires of his older brother, Laman. It appears that while his children shall suffer as the result of their parents neglect in teaching them, God promised Lehi that his grandchildren would not perish, but would survive the calamities that will occur.

Lehi also blessed the sons of Ishmael, but the record is absent regarding his words to them.

In conclusion, Lehi blesses his son, Sam.

2 Nephi 4:11

11 And after he had made an end of speaking unto them, he spake unto Sam, saying: Blessed art thou, and thy seed; for thou shalt inherit the land like unto thy brother Nephi. And thy seed shall be numbered with his seed; and thou shalt be even like unto thy brother, and thy seed like unto his seed; and thou shalt be blessed in all thy days.

The limited amount we know about Lemuel and Sam is that they mainly each supported their brothers. Lemuel followed Laman and Sam aligned himself with Nephi. The major difference is that Laman's example led his brother in wickedness; while Nephi led his brother in righteousness. Each brother upon birth received the ability to discern wickedness from righteousness. It is a question we must ask ourselves, Who are we following? Where are they leading us?

Nephi now makes a personal declaration regarding the scriptures and their meaning to him.

2 Nephi 4:15-16

15 And upon these [small plates] I write the things of my soul, and many of the scriptures which are engraven upon the plates of brass [especially the words of Isaiah?]. For my soul delighteth in the scriptures, and my heart pondereth them, and writeth them for the learning and the profit of my children.

16 Behold, my soul delighteth in the things of the Lord; and my heart pondereth continually upon the things which I have seen and heard.

Nephi expressed the great love and joy that the scriptures brought to him. As he read and pondered [meditates] upon

the words of the Lord, they had great meaning to him as they began to enhance his life.

For some, no doubt, these words are foreign for they have not yet drank from the living waters the Lord has provided for us. As one does so, they begin to feel the spirit and peace of the Holy Ghost even before they understand the meaning of the words. As they continue, it is as if they are in a dark room that slowly increases in illumination. As the light increases, you are now able to see things you had not seen before. But it is more than just seeing, it is also the feeling that follows. You come to understand truths that you had never known before. The scriptures begin to enlighten you. It is this experience that Nephi and others have tried to describe, but unfortunately cannot really be understood, until you and begin to read the scriptures ourself.

Selections from "The Psalm of Nephi"

"Behold, my soul deligheth in the things of the Lord;
and my heart pondereth continually upon the things which I
have seen and heard.

"Nevertheless, notwithstanding the great goodness of the Lord, in
showing me his great and marvelous works, my heart explaineth:

"O wretched man that I am!
Yea, my soul sorrowth because of my flesh
my soul grieveth because of my iniquities

"And when I desire to rejoice,
my heart groaneth because of my sins;
nevertheless, I know in whom I have trusted. (2 Ne.4:16-19)

"O then, if I have seen so great things,
if the Lord in his condescension unto the children of men
hath visited men in so much mercy,
"why should my heart weep and my soul linger in the valley of
sorrow
and my flesh waste away
and my strength slacken

"And why should I yield because of my flesh?
Yea, why should I give way to temptations,
that the evil one have place in my heart to destroy my
peace and afflict my soul?

"Why am I angry because of mine enemy? (2 Nephi 4:26-27)

"Awake, my soul! No longer droop in sin.
"Rejoice, O my heart,
and give place no more for the enemy of my soul.

"Do not anger again because of mine enemies.
Do not slacken my strength because of mine afflictions.

"Rejoice, O my heart,
and cry unto the Lord, and say:
O Lord, I will praise thee forever,
"Yea, my soul will rejoice in thee,
my God, and the rock of my salvation." (2 Nephi 4:28-30)

Reference: (*Introduction to the Book of Mormon - 1 Nephi through Alma 29*. Eric D. Huntsman, Ph.D. Fall, 2007, 10/10/2007, 11-13).

These selections from "The Psalm of Nephi" are included so that one might be able to understand both the sorrow and joy that a prophet experiences as he comes to truly know the Lord. It is important to understand that it is in this context that Nephi makes reference to his personal sins.

Rodney Turner states,

"Nephi's references to personal sins should not be taken to imply any serious moral transgression on his part. No man could have seen and known God as he did who was not pure in heart.

"Rather, he is almost surely alluding to the negative emotions of anger, impatience, and frustration he must have felt at times in dealing with his enemies, his own family, and others..." ("The Prophet Nephi," in *The Book of Mormon: First Nephi, The Doctrinal Foundation, Vol.2*. Edited with a Preface by Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate, Jr. Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1988, 93).

It is my belief that if I was in the presence of the Lord, and knowing my own imperfections, I would also feel emotions similar to those Ezra Taft Benson describes as "Godly sorrow." I would feel both "Godly sorrow" for my imperfections as well as an overwhelming joy to be in the presence of the Lord.

Ezra Taft Benson states,

"Godly sorrow is a gift of the Spirit. It is a deep realization that our actions have offended our Father and

our God. It is the sharp and keen awareness that our behavior caused the Savior. He who knew no sin, even the greatest of all, to endure agony and suffering. Our sins caused Him to bleed at every pore. This very real mental and spiritual anguish is what the scriptures refer to as having a broken heart and a contrite spirit.' (See 3Ne.9:20; Moro.6:2; D&C 20:37; 59:8; Ps.34:18; Ps.51:17; Isa.57:15). Such a spirit is the absolute prerequisite for true repentance." ("A Mighty Change of Heart," in *Ensign*, 1989, 2).

I am also reminded of the words of Neal A. Maxwell as I continue to seek to be better.

Neal A. Maxwell adds,

"The real act of personal sacrifice is not now nor ever has been placing an animal on the altar. Instead, it is a willingness to put the animal that is in us upon the altar—then willingly watching it be consumed! Such is the 'sacrifice unto [the Lord of] a broken heart and a contrite spirit' (3 Nephi 9:20)." (*Meekly and Lowly*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1987, 94).

As we have been taught by Nephi, in spite of the good in us, we each have areas that need our attention. While it is true that we will not achieve perfection during our life here on earth, we can improve. As we improve, we will feel a greater portion of the Spirit of the Lord in our lives. It is worth our effort to do better even if we do not experience an appearance from the Lord during our mortal life.

IV. 2 Nephi 5

As this chapter begins, we find Nephi on his knees praying unto the Lord.

2 Nephi 5:1-2

1 Behold, it came to pass that I, Nephi, did cry much unto the Lord my God, because of the anger of my brethren.

2 But behold, their anger did increase against me, insomuch that they did seek to take away my life.

This is not the first time that Laman and Lemuel and other members of the group have wanted to kill Nephi. The difference is that previously Father Lehi had been there to exhort and admonish his sons to the point that they temporarily set aside their murderous feelings towards their younger brother. Lehi is no longer alive to intervene. But there is more.

2 Nephi 5:3-4

3 Yea, they did murmur against me, saying: Our younger brother thinks to rule over us; and we have had much trial because of him; wherefore, now let us slay him, that we may not be afflicted more because of his words. For behold, we will not have him to be our ruler; for it belongs unto us, who are the elder brethren, to rule over this people.

4 Now I do not write upon these plates all the words which they murmured against me. But it sufficeth me to say, that they did seek to take away my life.

I believe there is another reason. By their actions, the brothers demonstrated to the Lord that their repentance was not sincere. They had been humble before, but nothing had changed within them. No amount of reasoning or even miraculous intervention had been sufficient. Now, there would be no voice of a loving father; nor the voice of the Lord or an angel. There would be no shock to awaken them. It was time for Nephi to separate from his brothers.

2 Nephi 5:5-6

5 And it came to pass that the Lord did warn me, that I, Nephi, should depart from them and flee into the wilderness, and all those who would go with me.

6 Wherefore, it came to pass that I, Nephi, did take my family, and also Zoram and his family, and Sam, mine elder brother and his family, and Jacob and Joseph, my younger brethren, and also my sisters, and all those who would go with me. And all those who would go with me were those who believed in the warnings and the revelations of God; wherefore, they did hearken unto my words.

Bryan Richards states,

“The division of the people at this time is as follows, the families of Nephi, Sam, Zoram, Jacob and Joseph go with Nephi. The families of Laman, Lemuel, and Ishmael’s sons become the Lamanites. That the Ishmaelites became Lamanites is shown in Alma 3:7, “and the Lord God set a mark upon them, yea, upon Laman and Lemuel, and also the sons of Ishmael, and Ishmaelitiesh women.” Nephi takes anyone who will follow the Lord—the division is not along family lines but was divided based on allegiance to the Lord (see also Mosaih 25:22-23).

(www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/2Nephi5).

Following the departure of Nephi and his group, they will continue to follow the Law of Moses.

2 Nephi 5:10

10 And we did observe to keep the judgments, and the statutes, and the commandments of the Lord in all things, according to the law of Moses.

Two questions come to mind. Why didn’t the Nephites live the higher law or the Gospel of Jesus Christ as they had the Melchizedek priesthood? (see 2 Nephi 6:2), and how did the Law of Moses differ from the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

Bryan Richards states,

“The Law of Moses was given as a lesser law, with a lesser priesthood, as Paul said, to be a schoolmaster *to bring us unto Christ* (Galatians 3:24).

Chart 2. The Law of Moses Leads to Gospel of Jesus Christ

THE LAW OF MOSES	THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST
<p>1. The Law: The 10 Commandments, etc. focusing on one’s actions & the outward ordinances.</p>	<p>1. The Law: the higher law, focusing on one’s actions, thoughts, and desires and requiring the exercise of faith.</p>
<p>2. The Covenant: If the Israelites keep the commandments, they are promised, I will walk among you and will be your God and ye shall be my people (Lev.26:12).</p>	<p>2. The Covenant: The new and everlasting covenant. (See also Hebrews 10:16-20).</p>

3. Blessings: See Deut. 28:1-14.	3. Blessings: All the blessings of the covenant of Abraham and eternal life (D&C 132).
4. Cursings: See Deut.28:15-68.	4. Cursings: To be turned over to the buffetings of Satan (D&C 104:9). See also D&C 84:41-42.
5. Priesthood: Aaronic	5. Priesthood: Melchizedek
6. Temple: Tabernacle of Moses and the Temple of Solomon.	6. Temple: Latter-day Temples with saving ordinances for the living and the dead.
7. Sacrifice: Animal sacrifices of the firstborn shall make an atonement for...his sin, and it shall be forgiven him (Lev.4:26).	7. Sacrifice: The offering of Christ's perfect sacrifice requires of us a broken heart and a contrite spirit (3 Ne.9:19-20).

"The Nephites lived according to the Law of Moses even to the point of building their own temples (2 Ne.5:16, 3 Ne.11:1). However, they had the benefit of understanding the symbolism of the Law as Nephi explained, "And notwithstanding we believe in Christ, we keep the law of Moses, and look forward with steadfastness unto Christ, until the law shall be fulfilled. For, for this end was the law given; wherefore the law hath become dead unto us, and we were made alive in Christ because of our faith; yet we keep the law because of the commandments" (2 Nephi 25:24-25). (www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/2Nephi5).

Although the Nephites continued to live the Law of Moses, when the two groups separated, what were the changes that occurred.

Chart 3. Changes for Nephites and Lamanites After Separate

Changes for Nephites	Changes for Lamanites
1. Through their righteous obedience, they had access to the spirit of the Lord and continued revelation (2 Ne. 5:10).	1. Due to their disobedience to the commandments, they had no one to receive revelation to guide them.
2. They had the priesthood (2 Ne.5:11).	2. They did not have the priesthood.
3. They took the plates of Brass with them (2 Ne.5:12).	3. They did not have the scriptures to guide their lives.

4. They took the Liahona which provided direction and instruction from the Lord (2 Ne.5:12).	4. They were cut off from the presence of the Lord through their own disobedience to the commandments of the Lord (2 Ne.5:20).
5. They took the sword of Laban which they then used to make swords in order to protect themselves from others (2 Ne.5:14).	5. They did not have a pattern from which to make swords for battle.
6. They were industrious and Nephi taught them to labor with their hands (2 Ne.5:15,17).	6. As a result of curse, they became an idle people, full of mischief and subtlety and fed group by being hunters. (2 Ne.5:24).
7. Retain white skin.	7. Change of skin pigment as a mark which occurred as a result of the loss of the Holy Ghost (2 Ne.5:21).

Reference: (Ted L. Gibbons. www.ldsgosepeldoctrine.net/tg/tg-2004-bofm-07.pdf); see also Brian D. Garner. *Search These Things Diligently*. salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 2003, 56; also Randal S. Chase. *Making Precious Things Plain, Vol.1*. Springville, Utah: Cedar Fort, Inc., 2007, 75).

Joseph Fielding Smith states,

"The dark skin was placed upon the Lamanites so that they could be distinguished from the Nephites and to keep the two peoples from mixing. The dark skin was the sign of the curse [not the curse itself]. The curse was the withdrawal of the Spirit of the Lord..

"The dark skin of those who have come into the Church is no longer to be considered a sign of the curse...These converts are delightsome and have the Spirit of the Lord" (*Answers to Gospel Questions, Vol.3*. Compiled by Joseph Fielding Smith, Jr. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1960, [Second Printing], 122-123).

Even though the Nephites and the Lamantes were separated, the Lamanites were not destroyed by the Lord, even though they are "cut off from his presence" (2 Nephi 5:20). The Lord gives Nephi a reason as to why they are preserved.

2 Nephi 5:25

25 And the Lord God said unto me: They shall be a scourge unto thy seed, to stir them up in remembrance of me; and inasmuch as they will not remember me, and hearken unto my words, they shall scourge them even unto destruction.

One reason why the Lamanites were spared was for them to continue to remind the Nephites to remember—and not forget—the many blessings they had received from the Lord. If the time were to ever occur in their history when the Nephites forgot the Lord—and became disobedient to his commandments—the Lamanites would then destroy them!

2 Nephi 5:26

26 And it came to pass that I, Nephi, did consecrate Jacob and Joseph, that they should be priests and teachers over the land of my people.

Joseph Fielding Smith states,

"The Nephites were descendants of Joseph. Lehi discovered this when reading the brass plates. He as a descendant of Manasseh, and Ishmael, who accompanied him with his family, was of the tribe of Ephraim. Therefore there were no Levites who accompanied Lehi to the Western Hemisphere. Under these conditions the Nephites officiated by virtue of the Melchizedek Priesthood from the days of Lehi to the days of the appearance of our Savior among them. It is true that Nephi 'consecrated Jacob and Joseph' that they should be priests and teachers over the land of the Nephites, but the fact that plural terms priests and teachers were used indicated that this was not a reference to the definite office in the priesthood in either case, but it was a general assignment to teach, direct, and admonish the people. Otherwise the terms priest and teacher would have been given, in the singular...From these and numerous other passages we learn that it was by the authority of the Melchizedek Priesthood that the Nephites administered from the time they left Jerusalem until the time of the coming of Jesus Christ" (*Answers to Gospel Questions, Vol.1*. Compiled by Joseph Fielding Smith, Jr. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1957, 124-126).

Given the clarification offered by Joseph Fielding Smith Jr., we may assume that Jacob and Joseph officiated under the office of Elder in the Melchizedek priesthood.

2 Nephi 5:28-30, 32-33

28 And thirty years had passed away from the time we left Jerusalem.

29 And I, Nephi, had kept the records upon my plates, which I had made, of my people thus far.

30 and it came to pass that the Lord God said unto me: Make other plates; and thou shalt engraven many things upon them which are good in my sight, for the profit of thy people.

32 And I engraved that which is pleasing unto God. And if my people are pleased with the things of God they will be pleased with mine engravings which are upon these plates.

33 And if my people desire to know the more particular part of the history of my people they must search mine other plates.

As previously noted, there are two sets of plates. They are referred to as the small plates of Nephi and the large plates of Nephi. The small plates contain those things "which is pleasing unto God" (2 Nephi 5:32), while the large plates of Nephi contain "the history of my people" (2 Nephi 5:33).

Eldin Ricks states,

"When Joseph Smith first received the plates he first translated Mormon's abridgment of the Book of Lehi. Then his assistant, Martin Harris, lost the 116 page translation of this section. Although the Prophet was filled with despair...we may suppose his despair turned to joy when he learned that the sacred *Small Plate of Nephi* (with Mormon's appendage thereto) covered the same period of history as the more secular Book of Lehi and was 'more particular concerning the things' which the Lord intended should be brought to the knowledge of the human family in our generation...When the Prophet finished his translation of the *Small Plates of Nephi* he returned to the *Plates of Mormon* and translated the rest of Mormon's abridgment but stopped short of the *Sealed Plates*, as he was not permitted to translate them" (*Story of the Formation of the Book of*

Mormon Plates. Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1971, 12).

Joseph Fielding Smith and Robert L. Millet state,

"The Book of Mormon, as we now have it, consists of the following:

A title page prepared by Moroni
The small plates of Nephi (an unabridged record, 1 Nephi through Omni)
The Words of Mormon (a transition between the small plates and Mormon's abridgment of the large plates)
Mormon's abridgment of the large plates of Nephi and some of his other writings (Mosiah through Mormon 7, Moroni 7-9)
Moroni's abridgement of the twenty-four gold plates (the Jaredite record, the Book of Ether)
Moroni's writings (Mormon 8-9, Moroni)."
(Doctrinal Commentary of the Book of Mormon, Vol.2. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft 1988, [4th Printing, 1992], 120).

Nephi concludes his record.

2 Nephi 5:34

34 And it sufficeth me to say that forty years had passed away, and we had already had wars and contentions with our brethren.

V. Conclusions

There are many lessons for us to learn from these chapters.

A) The vision seen by Joseph of Egypt of Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon helps us to better understand the foresight of Our Heavenly Father and his plan for his children. Father Lehi reminds each of us that ultimately parents are responsible to teach their children in righteousness. If they fail to do so, they will be held accountable by the Lord.

B) "The Psalm of Nephi," gives us special insight into the inner feelings of a Prophet of God. We learn through this Psalm that even those who are righteous struggle with feelings of inadequacy as they seek to become a better

person. We can become better if we will turn our lives completely over to Our Savior, Jesus Christ, and continue to strive each day to keep his commandments.

C) There will be those individuals, who despite our best efforts, will "not choose" to follow our Heavenly Father. Like Nephi, we must try to teach them correct principles, and if they reject our efforts, continue to be a good example to them. It is important, however, that we surround our lives with those who also want to follow the gospel plan.

In conclusion, in 2 Nephi, Chapters 4-5, Nephi gives us five suggestions to help us when we experience feelings of discouragement. They are: (1) Read the scriptures and ponder the words of the Lord (4:15-16); (2) Trust in the Lord and look to Him for support (4:20-21, 34); (3) Become engage in daily prayer, including fasting (4:24); (4) Be industrious; go to work; forget self (5:15, 17); and, (5) Serve in the temple (5:16).

How grateful I am for the Book of Mormon and the lessons it teaches to help bring me back into the presence of Our Heavenly Father. The path to follow is clearly marked.

Our next lesson (BM#08), addresses the lessons taught by Jacob [2 Nephi 6-10], regarding our need for the Atonement of Jesus Christ and what we can do to help us receive all the blessings the Atonement has to offer.