

BOM 016 – 1 Nephi 16

Hello, my dear friends, and good to be here with you again as we study today in the Book of Mormon. I would encourage you, along with your study, with these lessons that you access the great information and knowledge is available from the Internet. What a blessed time it is live in our day and have access at our fingertips to tremendous amounts of knowledge in all areas and, yes, even in the study of the Book of Mormon. As I've mentioned before there are so many talented men and women, who have made commentaries concerning this great book, that it would be a shame not to use that availability in your study. There is so much to be gleaned from their knowledge and experience that helps make the Book of Mormon become alive to us. My intent is to give you my understanding, my experiences, and to help us learn how to study the Book of Mormon in a way that perhaps you not experienced before. There is a temptation to go to the Internet and retrieve interesting information to use in these lessons. That, however, would not be faithful to my original intent and what I believe the Lord wants us to do here. Going that route would to easily slip into the trap of trying to impress those who listen to these lessons with my knowledge and understanding. I don't want to impress. I hope to inspire, and I pray that the Lord spirit will be with me as we study together. With that being said, let's turn to 1 Nephi 6:1.

1 Nephi 16:

[1] And now it came to pass that after I, Nephi, had made an end of speaking to my brethren, behold they said unto me: Thou hast declared unto us hard things, more than we are able to bear.

All of us have experienced this in our interactions with others, especially those that we have stewardship for and that look to us for guidance and encouragement. My wife has more than once said, *Mike it's not what you said, it's the tone that you said it with.* I think of Alma 38:12 where Helaman is canceling his son Shiblon.

Alma 38:12

[12] Use boldness, but not overbearance; ...

I have pondered that over the years and found that most of the time when I'm trying to make a point and my passion is involved that ***overbearance*** is more often the main ingredients in the discussion. Boldness comes as a result of the Holy Spirit giving you guidance and when spoken under the direction of the spirit is more difficult for the listener to take offense. Go to section 121 in the Doctrine and Covenants let's look at verse 37. If someone declares to us that we have spoken hard things to them, it may well be because we have, go down 4 lines in verse 37, spoken these words in an effort to, this part,

D&C 121:37

[37] ...gratify our pride, our vain ambition, (or more likely this next part), to exercise control or dominion or compulsion upon the souls of the children of men.

When that happens, then verse 37 of the end says,

[37] ...the heavens withdraw themselves; the spirit of the Lord is grieved; and when it is withdrawn, Amen to the priesthood or authority of that (person) [man].

When we seek to instruct or teach or edify in any way it should be with the words mentioned in verses 41 and 42;

D&C 121:41-44

persuasion, long-suffering, gentleness, meekness, love unfeigned, kindness.

And then the heart of this whole dialogue on interaction between God's children is found in verse 43;

[43] ...reproving betimes with sharpness.

Think about the discussion is taking place with Nephi and his brethren.

[43] ...When moved upon by the Holy Ghost.

If you are seeking for that influence, the Holy Ghost will guide you and direct you and give you the words and teachings that are necessary in order to communicate the truth to someone who resists it, and

[43] ...then showing forth afterwards an increase of love toward him whom thou hast reproved, lest he esteem thee to be his enemy; (and then verse 44);

[44] That he (the person that you are reproving) may know that thy faithfulness is stronger than the cords of death.

These are the priesthood instructions given by the Lord on how we should interact one with another to avoid offense and misunderstanding. Now, no matter what you do, even under the direction of the Holy Ghost, it is still the choice of the person you're speaking to, to take offense and find your sayings hard. But at least we can do all we can as directed by the spirit and following these inspired words and sentences found in the holy Scriptures to speak the truth at all times and seek to be a blessing to our brothers and sisters. Verse 2.

1 Nephi 16:

[2] And it came to pass that I said unto them that I knew that I had spoken hard things against the wicked, according to the truth; ...

Now, according to Dale Carnegie, this is not a statement that is designed to make friends and influence people. Basically, he has told his brethren that if these things are hard for you, it's because you're wicked. I can feel the justification in Nephi doing such a thing because this is an ongoing saga with these brethren. Every year that goes by as they are in the Valley of Lemuel; and that could have been several years; this is, more or less, a common experience among these brothers. Sides are also being taken at this time and allies sought for in the conflict of truth versus error. Surely, Laman and Lemuel have sought to justify their arguments and comments in these discussions. Nephi cares nothing for their justifications and in the next sentence says,

[2] ...and the righteous have I justified, and testified that they should be lifted up at the last day; ...

I see the Lord in an ongoing love for all of the members of the Lehi colony, even for these rebellious sons and those of Ishmael's family who have aligned themselves with Nephi's older brethren, striving to help them come to a knowledge of the truth and forsake their hardhearted and stiffnecked murmuring ways. But, I can also see that more and more the situation is coming to a head. They have

already shown their disposition to commit murder when they bound Nephi on the return trip from Jerusalem and left him in the wilderness to be devoured by wild beasts. Sounds a lot like what Joseph brethren did to him; and placed him in a pit with no way to escape; and then took his clothing, tore it up, and put blood upon it to show Jacob that his younger son had been killed and eaten by beasts of prey. Bottom part of verse 2,

[2] ...wherefore,...

Wherefore means because of the things that are written in the previous statements.

[2] ...the guilty taketh the truth to be hard, for it cutteth them to the very center.

There is a saying right now in the geopolitical scene that those who yell the loudest are the most guilty. Another element that probably was at work here, even though not directly mentioned, is that the very things that Laman and Lemuel and others of those rebels are accusing Nephi and Sam and other righteous members of the colony of are the things that they are guilty of themselves. This is the way of the natural man. The word of God is light, truth, and love. There are great metaphors in the Scriptures for the word of God being likened unto a two-edged sword. Hebrews 4:12 says this,

Hebrews 4:12

[12] For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Back to the last part of 1 Nephi 16:2, *the guilty taketh the truth to be hard, for it cutteth them to the very center.* Think of this two-edged sword of truth. In the 12th verse of the 4th chapter of Hebrews Paul says, *it is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.* Those who are filled with the spirit of the Lord use this spirit as a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart and are able to divide asunder, the camouflage, the viles, the snares and traps, and the deceptions of the dark one. Nephi wheels this sword with great efficiency, no matter how his untoward brethren try to justify themselves. It comes to naught with Nephi being filled with the spirit, discerning their thoughts and their intentions, and making a blatantly public to them. Verse 3.

1 Nephi 16:

[3] And now my brethren, if ye were righteous and were willing to hearken to the truth, and give heed unto it, that ye might walk uprightly before God, then ye would not murmur because of the truth, and say: Thou speakest hard things against us.

Did you see the principal in verse 3? *if you were righteous*, there should if, *willing to hearken to the truth and give heed to it that you might walk uprightly* **then** *you will not murmur because of the truth.* Why do people murmur? Reverse it. This is how the principal works. They're not righteous. They are rebellious to the truth. They will not heed it, and they walk unrighteously before God. This is why the truth has no place in them. Go with me over the Mosiah 13:7 for just a moment this is the moment. This is Abinadi speaking before the court of King Noah. Noah has just ordered his execution. Abinadi withstands boldly and because he's filled with the spirit of God, the truth, the sword, that Paul speaks about which is quick and powerful and sharper than a two-edged sword *piercing dividing asunder of the soul and spirit in joint and marrow* and discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart, they seek his immediate death. But because he's filled with the light of God and with the power of the Lord they forbear. Verse 7. He says,

Mosiah 13:7

[7] Ye see that ye have not power to slay me, therefore I finish my message. (This part right here) Yea, and I perceive that it cuts you to your hearts because I tell you the truth concerning your iniquities.

There it is again. Let's go to 2nd Nephi chapter 9 verse 40. This is Jacob's words and he says,

2 Nephi 9:40

[40] O, my beloved brethren, give ear to my words. Remember the greatness of the Holy One of Israel. Do not say that I have spoken hard things against you; ...

See here's a repeat of this whole thing we're reading about in Nephi verse 16. Jacob is facing it one more time. This time not to his brothers, Laman and Lemuel, for they have now parted way and Jacob is now speaking to the rebellious among the Nephi colony that has separated themselves from the Lamanites. Back to verse 40 verse 4

[40] ...for if ye do, ye will revile against the truth; for I have spoken the words of your Maker. (Here we go) I know that the words of truth are hard against all uncleanness; but the righteous fear them not, for they love the truth and are not shaken.

Well, this is a great principal in the Book of Mormon. One that we can look at almost daily in our lives we come up against this kind of situation. We need to be careful in our interactions with people as we teach and converse, correct and maybe redirect, that we do so in love for them; not because they have offended us or hurt our feelings. There comes a time, however, when the Lord will inspire you to speak boldly his word which he places in your mind and in your heart; and at that time we must speak his words. Verse 4,

1 Nephi 16:

[4] And it came to pass that I, Nephi, did exhort my brethren, with all diligence, to keep the commandments of the Lord.

[5] And it came to pass that they did humble themselves before the Lord; insomuch that I had joy and great hopes of them, that they would walk in the paths of righteousness.

We've all experienced that, haven't we? We've all been instruments in the hands of the Lord in helping to correct and redirect those that we love. We've all experienced the great hope and joy that comes as we see the spirit touch their lives and you can see the light of Christ again shining in their eyes. However, there is a great warfare going on here. It is a spiritual warfare of good versus evil, light versus darkness, God versus the enemy to God; and unless we can find a way, working through the agency of those that we minister to, to help them on a more permanent basis, these respites have spiritual enlightenment unless there is a continual flow of the light of Christ for the human spirit these respites will quickly fade back into the holes and crevices of the dark ones and their domain. One thing for sure, if we try to do this on our own without the guidance of the Holy Spirit, without the companionship of the Holy Ghost, without the ministering of sacred angelic beings, we are destined to failure for ourselves and for those that we are called to minister to. We must not undertake this great ministry that we are called to bring fathers children to the Lord Jesus Christ, so that he can save them through his atonement, and not by our misguided efforts. Verse 6.

[6] Now, all these things were said and done as my father dwelt in a tent in the valley which he called Lemuel.

[7] And it came to pass that I, Nephi, took one of the daughters of Ishmael to wife; and also, my brethren took of the daughters of Ishmael to wife; and also Zoram took the eldest daughter of Ishmael to wife.

Look at your footnote 7a word says *that I, Nephi, took one of the daughters of Ishmael to wife*. Go back to 1 Nephi 7:19.

1 Nephi 7:19

[19] And it came to pass that they were angry with me again, and sought to lay hands upon me; but behold, 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.

According to the footnotes here, and I have no reason to disbelieve, this daughter in verse 19 is the very same daughter that Nephi marries in Nephi 16:7.

1 Nephi 16:

[8] And thus my father had fulfilled all the commandments of the Lord which had been given unto him. And also, I, Nephi, had been blessed of the Lord exceedingly.

We might say here that they had been steadfast and immovable, the description of the valley in which they live, the valley of Lemuel in keeping all of the commandments of the Lord up to this point. Verse 9.

[9] And it came to pass that the voice of the Lord spake unto my father by night, and commanded him that on the morrow he should take his journey into the wilderness.

The Lord speaking to Lehi by night, it's probably done by a dream since this is been the way recorded in the Scriptures that the Lord talks with Lehi. Verse 10.

[10] And it came to pass that as my father arose in the morning, and went forth to the tent door, to his great astonishment he beheld upon the ground a round ball of curious workmanship; and it was of fine brass. And within the ball were two spindles; and the one pointed the way whither we should go into the wilderness.

The word *curious* and Middle Eastern dialogue does not mean what it means to us. Curious to these people means exceedingly fine and intricate workmanship. The round ball - the symbol of eternity. Go over in 1 Nephi 10:9, it says, *that God's course is one eternal round. Within the ball there were 2 spindles in the one pointed the way whether we should go into the wilderness.* Go with me to Alma [Helaman] 37 let's go to verse 38. Here we have valuable information from the Book of Mormon that we don't have in 1 Nephi, at least not recorded. Perhaps it was upon Lehi's record and will have that at some future day but in the meantime, Alma speaking to his son Helaman gives us some valuable information. Verse 38.

Helaman 37:38-41

[38] And now, my son, I have somewhat to say concerning the thing which our fathers call a ball, or director—or our fathers called it Liahona, which is, being interpreted, a compass; and the Lord prepared it.

Notice the word director. The one spindle in the Liahona pointed the way whether they should go in the wilderness. It directed them on their course. Verse 39.

*[39] And behold, there cannot any man work after the manner of so **curious** (there is that word again) a workmanship. And behold, it was prepared to show unto our fathers the course which they should travel in the wilderness.*

Verse 40.

[40] And it did work for them according to their faith in God; therefore, if they had faith to believe that God could cause that those spindles should point the way they should go, behold, it was done; therefore they had this miracle, and also many other miracles wrought by the power of God, day by day.

We will see some of those miracles had to do with water, and the food they ate, their security, their protection. Verse 41.

[41] Nevertheless, because those miracles were worked by small means it did show unto them marvelous works. ...

That statement is harkening back to verses 6 and 7 in the same chapter 37 in ~~Alma~~ [Helaman].

Helaman 37:6-7

[6] Now ye may suppose that this is foolishness in me; but behold I say unto you, that by small and simple things are great things brought to pass; and small means in many instances doth confound the wise.

Verse 7.

[7] And the Lord God doth work by means to bring about his great and eternal purposes; and by very small means the Lord doth confound the wise and bringeth about the salvation of many souls.

That is a principal of our Lord works with his children and the telestial world. Back to verse 41.

[41] ... They were slothful, and forgot to exercise their faith and diligence and then those marvelous works ceased, and they did not progress in their journey;

I believe that this first spindle is a symbol of the light of Christ, the spirit of Christ, one of the definitions of the Holy Spirit and that is the main purpose is to guide and direct us. Notice that I say **its** main purpose because it is not a **he**. It has no personality. this is the divine matrix that interconnects everything that has life and light, truth and love as it says in section 88, *it is in and through all things and fills the immensity of space*. where there is life there is this light of Christ. Now let's go back to 1 Nephi 16:11.

1 Nephi 16:

[11] And it came to pass that we did gather together whatsoever things we should carry into the wilderness, and all the remainder of our provisions which the Lord had given unto us; and we did take seed of every kind that we might carry into the wilderness.

Even though it says that they took provisions with them several years earlier out of Jerusalem as they traveled to the Valley of Lemuel, is it possible that this valley also provided a way for them to grow food along with and to supplement any animals that they used for food? And during this period of time were they able to put away in-store preparing for their journey to the promised land seed that was grown right in the Valley of Lemuel and they harvested for their food during the years that they were there? We don't see them interacting, even though I suppose it's possible, during the time here in the Valley Lemuel with outside merchants or resources other know what they had in the Valley of Lemuel. These places were Lehi and his family are, are along the ancient frankincense trail that is been used for thousands of years in this area. Verse 12.

[12] And it came to pass that we did take our tents and depart into the wilderness, across the river Laman.

[13] And it came to pass that we traveled for the space of four days, nearly a south-southeast direction, and we did pitch our tents again; and we did call the name of the place Shazer.

Look at your footnote on 13a Hebrew meaning twisting or intertwining. Now again there's a wealth of information on these various places, whether its Lemuel, Shazer or Nahom and I'm not going to take the time to go into this. It's very interesting, and I would encourage you to search it on the Internet for it gives great insight into some of these things. Verse 14.

[14] And it came to pass that we did take our bows and our arrows, and go forth into the wilderness to slay food for our families; and after we had slain food for our families we did return again to our families in the wilderness, to the place of Shazer. And we did go forth again in the wilderness, following the same direction, keeping in the most fertile parts of the wilderness, which were in the borders near the Red Sea.

Verse 15.

[15] And it came to pass that we did travel for the space of many days, slaying food by the way, with our bows and our arrows and our stones and our slings.

Now, for many, many years I was a bow hunter. I used a Bear recurve bow. It had a 70-pound pull, and I became very good with straight up, instinct shooting. I love to hunting big game with the bow and arrow and I took many deer and other wild animals with this weapon. We had no sights, there were no pulleys, there was none of the fancy gear that you see now in archery equipment for hunting big game. You just shot so much that you instinctively knew distance, elevation, were to knock the arrow for full pull, how long your arrow should be, how many pounds of pull you could successfully handle and all in all it became quite an art to hunt and become successful with a bow and arrow. I have a Bachelor of Science degree in outdoor survival and primitive living. I received that degree from Brigham Young University and was actively involved in their outdoor survival schools there in the 70s. I learned how to make weapons, how to make primitive traps, and also became fairly proficient with using sling and stones for weaponry. I made my own bows. I made my own bowstrings. I backed the bowls with sinew taken out of the back legs of animals. I used hide to make glue, to glue the sinew to the back of the bows. I made my own arrows and I chipped stone using deer antlers for the points of these arrows. So, I have a little bit of experience in hunting in

wilderness areas and slaying food by the way with our bows and our arrows, our stones and our slings. And I will tell you, that like gardening in our day, this is not something that you begin to do when hunger sets in. You have to have many years of experience. These boys who are hunting game by the way with bows and arrows and stones and slings are advanced in this skill. This is not something they undertook just prior to or after leaving Jerusalem. They have been using these weapons with proficiency for many years. The fact is we see that Nephi has a bow made out of fine steel tells me that he is an accomplished archer and adroit [clever or skillful in using the hands or mind] Hunter. Let's go back to verse 16.

[16] And we did follow the directions of the ball, which led us in the more fertile parts of the wilderness.

I've learned, in my years of hunting, that there are certain places at certain times of the year where you're more likely to find game than at other times of the year. Right now, where I live, the elk and the deer are all down now out of the Aspin and the Pine, they are in the pinion and cedar forests at a lower elevation. If I were to be a hunter today I would know where to go in the more fertile parts for taking animals in the wilderness. I don't know that their use of the bow and arrow, while they were in residence in Jerusalem, was necessary for them to live by taking wild game, but if they were merchants and traveling the ancient merchant routes were infested with robbers it would've been good to have a proficient knowledge of the bow and arrow use for safety and protection. Verse 17.

[17] And after we had traveled for the space of many days, we did pitch our tents for the space of a time, that we might again rest ourselves and obtain food for our families.

I want to take a minute and skip over the page. Let's go to verse 26. I want to talk some more about the *Liahona* - this interesting ball. Verse 26.

[26] And it came to pass that the voice of the Lord said unto him: Look upon the ball, and behold the things which are written.

[27] And it came to pass that when my father beheld the things which were written upon the ball, ...

See this is the first time in this chapter that we find that there were writings upon the ball. Prior to this we have been pointing to one spindle that directed their course in the wilderness and now we're finding that there something that can be written upon the ball, verse 27, and my father

[27] ...[he] did fear and tremble exceedingly, and also my brethren and the sons of Ishmael and our wives.

Why are they afraid of was written upon the ball? Now is become Book of Mormon detectives for just a minute, and let's look at verse 28.

*[28] And it came to pass that I, Nephi, beheld the **pointers** (two of them) which were in the ball, that they did work according to the faith and diligence and heed which we did give unto them.*

Now here's the key, watch, verse 29.

*[29] And there was also written upon them (them points back to the pointers, not back to the ball. what's written on the pointers?) **a new writing**, which was plain to be read, ...*

See verse 27 it says *the things which were written up on the ball* but in verse 28 and 29 it says, that there are writings *upon the pointers in the ball*. Again verse 29,

[29] And there was also written upon them (the pointers, referring back to 28) a new writing, which was plain to be read, which did give us understanding concerning the ways of the Lord; ...

Now, we're going into an area that is more than just direction. This is more than just pointing the way they should travel in the wilderness. This is giving teachings and understanding that they didn't receive from the first pointer.

[29] ... and it was written and changed from time to time, according to the faith and diligence which we gave unto it. ...

Now, here's a thus we see statement. Remember that when Mormon or any of the Book of Mormon chroniclers use this wording they're wanting us to pay attention to gather a message about what they been teaching, and here's the message.

[29] ... And thus we see that by small means the Lord can bring about great things. ...

There you go. That's what Alma was speaking about his son, Helaman, over in Alma [Helaman] 37:6-7. In this world Lord has given us tools to help us successfully make our way through our wilderness. This wilderness that Lehi and his family are in can be likened unto our own sojourn in the telestial world. As we mentioned before wilderness refers to a place that is wild; it's dangerous; you can lose your life in this wilderness. As we saw in Nephi's dream of the tree of life there's a difference between the word wilderness and waste place. You can survive in the wilderness, as I have been trying to do through primitive wilderness survival skills, but I would not do so well in a place where there are no wild resources. So, the Lord has given his children means by which they can maneuver and navigate, through using these divine means, the telestial world and successfully completed their 2nd estate experience. The primary means given to all of his children is the Light of Christ. We learn from the Book of Mormon that it is given to all of his children regardless of gender, religion, race, or any other criteria that he used to divide God's children in this world. It is a birthday gift given to all men and women to teach them right from wrong and to help them on their journey. In some places it's referred to as man's conscience. Is the first spindle in the Liahona a symbol of the light of Christ to direct and guide us in our wilderness? And were there writings in 2 places on this curious instrument? Were there some things that were written up on the ball and other things that were written upon the pointers that were within the ball? If we would take strictly what we are reading here in these verses it would appear so. These writings are more expansive than the basic directions of a compass. Notice again verse 29.

[29] ... they did give us understanding concerning the ways of the Lord (and they) changed from time to time (and) they operate according to our faith and diligence.

The other thing that the Lord gives his children, in this world to help them on their journey, is the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost is not reserved for just members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; but can be accessed by all of God's children if they will hearken unto and follow the light of Christ which is designed to take them to the greater light of the Holy Ghost. The light of Christ precedes the Holy Ghost by divine purpose. If you're not willing to follow the direction and guidance given through the light of Christ, how can you expect to receive the greater understanding, knowledge and wisdom that comes from the greater light the Holy Ghost? The one has to precede the

other. Are the writings that are upon the ball and the writings which gave understanding the ways of the Lord upon the spindles in the ball; are they representative of this greater light and knowledge that we receive through the Holy Ghost? And then a step further is as those who received the witnessing power of the Holy Ghost concerning truth are guided through that light into a covenant relationship with the Father and the Son. If they continue to that point they're invited to enter into a covenant, the token of the covenant which is baptism in water by immersion for the remission of sins. Now we've entered into a whole new world of instruction, teachings, edification and veil rending possibilities; but all that comes in a sequence, one following after the other, the Holy Spirit, the general light given to all; the Holy Ghost, given to those who hear the truth and seek for witness of it; and the gift of the Holy Ghost culminating with the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost for those who enter into a covenant with the Father in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and press forward steadfastly continually holding fast to the iron rod. Is this Liahona, this compass with its spindles and its writings, is this the great symbol and metaphor of the light of Christ, the Holy Ghost, and the gift of the Holy Ghost? Is the Holy Ghost before a covenant the writings written up on the ball and is the gift of Holy Ghost after entering into a covenant, including its baptism of fire, the writings upon the spindles within the ball? I love to be a detective in the Book of Mormon and detect the things that God has hidden many times in plain sight if we will simply ask, seek and knock. Go with me over to Ether 2:5 and let's look at an earlier example of something similar that were reading about here in 1 Nephi 16. Ether 2 talks about the Jaredites preparing for their journey to the Promised Land, A land choice above all other lands. It is the same land with Lehi's being guided to and while he's here at Shazer the Jaredites are alive and their civilization is flourishing in the ancient Americas. I find it interesting that for a period of time as the Lehi colony is upon the land of promise in America at that same time the Jaredites are contemporary with them and another group will also be contemporary with the Jaredites and the Nephites and that will be the Mulekites that follow Lehi sometime after his departure from Jerusalem. Very interesting that these groups of people, living on the same land, are unaware of each other's existence for long periods of time. At any rate go with me to Ether 2:5.

Ether 2:5

[5] And it came to pass that the Lord commanded them (that's Jared and his brother and their families) ***that they should go forth into the wilderness, ...***

Sees the same thing is happening right now over verse Nephi 16, continuing on,

[5] ... yea, into that quarter where there never had man been. ...

That won't be the same for the Lehi colony, but it was for the Jaredite colony.

[5] ... And it came to pass that the Lord did go before them, and did talk with them as he stood in a cloud, and gave directions whither they should travel.

See the comparison here between the 2 groups. Those who have entered into covenant with the Lord heed his counsel and keep his commandments will always find themselves guided by him in their respective wildernesses. Your wilderness, brothers and sisters, is that place that you enter into every day as you awaken in this world and go forth for the next 16 hours. That is surely as dangerous wilderness for you in 2019 as these wildernesses were for the Jaredites and the Nephites. And you need to be guided and directed, and taught and instructed, protected and preserved in our day as much as they were in their day. Nothing has changed in this respect. This is where the Book of Mormon has great power and benefit to us as we liken what happened to these ancients to us in January 2019. Now, as the Lehi colony had an instrument that had two spindles in it to direct them, I

find it interesting that the Jaredites in their vessels had 2 stones. This is also similar to the 2 stones that Aaron had in his breastplate, that Mosiah had, and that ultimately Joseph Smith comes into possession of - the Urim and Thummim. 2 stones in the Jaredite barges provided light for them in their darkened environment. I find out that when the Lord uses the word light very often he also uses the word truth. The Urim and Thummim were anciently referred to as, in their interpretation, as lights and perfection - lights and perfection. One stone was referred to as light; and the other stone is referred to as perfection. Could the light and perfection be symbolic of the light equaling the light of Christ and the perfection equaling the Holy Ghost? Again, the two beautiful elements given to us while in the wilderness to lighten our way and bring us to further light and knowledge and eventually perfection in the Lord Jesus Christ. Go back to verse 27 in 1 Nephi 16.

1 Nephi 16:

[27] And it came to pass that when my father beheld the things which were written upon the ball, he did fear and tremble exceedingly, and also my brethren and the sons of Ishmael and our wives.

The question we ask is: what was written upon the ball that caused them to be so fearful? Now keep in mind that they are in a wilderness area now. They are having to rely totally upon the Lord's mercy to guide them to where they can find food and water, to protect them from their enemies, and to advance them along their way. Let's go to Alma 37 and look at verse 41 to see if we can find out an answer as to why they feared and trembled from what they saw written upon the ball. We take this literally this is not what's written on the spindles in the ball, but written up on the ball. Verse 31.

Alma 37:41-43

[41] Nevertheless, because those miracles were worked by small means it did show unto them marvelous works. They were slothful, and forgot to exercise their faith and diligence and then those marvelous works ceased, and they did not progress in their journey;

If they're not moving in the course the Lord directs, they quickly become hungry and thirsty and desperate and vulnerable to death in this wilderness area. Remember they come from a place where the Lord provided for several years water, shelter, coolness in the Arabian heat of the summer that can reach 125° and were camped in a beautiful place. They have now left that place and the circumstances are much different. They need to make this part of their journey relatively quick. Go to verse 42.

[42] Therefore, they tarried in the wilderness, or did not travel a direct course, and were afflicted with hunger and thirst, because of their transgressions.

Verse 43.

*[43] And now, my son, I would that ye should understand that these things are not without a shadow;
...*

Here is the greatness and now of the Liahona

[43] ...for as our fathers were slothful to give heed to this compass (now these things were temporal) they did not prosper; even so it is with things which are spiritual.

If you took for granted the direction, the guidance, the teachings, and the instruction that was found within this marvelous instrument and you became casual, you would quickly wake up as your

stomach started to rumble and your thirst burn and realize that in order for you to be taken care of in these areas of mortal life requires you to have faith and diligence in keeping the command of the Lord. That could be our fearful awakening, especially, if you see everything on the ball cease, no messages, no movement because of your hardheartedness and stiff neckedness. Now, I know people who had marvelous instruction given to them of the Lord who become apathetic and complacent in that, take it for granted, which the Lord condemns and calls vanity and unbelief; and I've seen the fear in their face as they have slipped backwards into a place that they thought that they would never reenter again. The key word here is diligence. Diligence does not describe a silver bullet approach to living the gospel. You cannot approach casually and expect to have the blessings consistently that the Lord promises. Casual obedience never brings consistent blessing. It's like our spending time with the Lord. If you want the greatest gift that he can give you in this life, and that is to have your fallen nature replaced by his divine nature which automatically gives you an inheritance in the celestial world, you're going to have to be involved daily at least an hour of day and hopefully more as you mature in this principal in order to access these marvelous things. I'm sure that Nephi teaches these principles as well as Lehi to their rebellious children and I can see that hearing this over and over again could become grinding upon them to where their murderous intentions are brought close to the surface and erupt at certain time. These children want all that the Lord has, but they wanted their way not his was way. They are willing to touch bases is periodically with the Lord and check in, but they never ground themselves upon the foundation of the doctrine of Christ. They're what Neil Maxwell described as those seeking for Zion who want to have the blessings of Zion but maintain a summer cottage in Babylon. Let's go back to verse 18 in 1 Nephi 16.

1 Nephi 16:

[18] And it came to pass that as I, Nephi, went forth to slay food, behold, I did break my bow, which was made of fine steel; and after I did break my bow, behold, my brethren were angry with me because of the loss of my bow, for we did obtain no food.

What does that tell you, that he is the better hunter of them all and even that they all hunt, that Nephi was the one that consistently brings home the bacon. There are several principles involved here that are represented in this. There is something in us, that when we were in a prosperous state, our tendency is to think that the prosperity will not only always remain but that it will increase. How many people have lost everything because they did not wisely use their resources and they had them always thinking that there would be those resources day after day and that they would increase and prosper more; foolish thinking in the Telestial world, for were never any more than 90 days from being homeless anyone of us. The other principle involved here is: and this is what I see it working with Nephi and his brethren, when you give to a person and help a person over a long period of time they may begin by expressing gratitude but after a while they take for granted your care and love and concern and grows into an expectation so that when that care and concern ends or ceases the person on the receiving end forgets about the years of kindness and mercy and goodness and only remembers that you've stopped. These are attributes of the natural man. This loss of this bow and their ability to get food is a test to see if they will trust the Lord; to see if they will repent of their stiff neckedness and hardheartedness and return again to him. I call it *the day of take it away*. Look at verse 20.

[20] And it came to pass that Laman and Lemuel and the sons of Ishmael did begin to murmur exceedingly, because of their sufferings and afflictions in the wilderness; ...

I see a lot of complaining but I don't see any solutions to the problem here. All they're doing is adding to the burden Nephi already had to be the provider and protector of this colony. How like us it

is to murmur and complain and become negative when things become difficult. Why is it that we focus on the dark things, the uncomfortable things, the negative things instead of, turn that around, count our blessings and express gratitude for the good things that we do have? In expressing gratitude, the spirit of entitlement vanishes, and revelation flows as to how to successfully manage the situation we find ourselves in. Gratitude is the key to all of this. Back to verse 20.

[20] ... and also my father began to murmur against the Lord his God; yea, and they were all exceedingly sorrowful, even that they did murmur against the Lord.

Wow, that is really something that even the great prophet Lehi... now I would give it to him... he's older man now. He's maybe worn a little thin because of this bickering contention that seems to be more or less continual within their little colony, but even Lehi, the prophet leader, great visionary when things such as food and water are removed and the conveniences of this life; even he begins to murmur. And notice it doesn't say complain as Sariah did when her sons did not return from Jerusalem and the Laban mission. Here, Nephi uses the word murmur describing his father at this time. Let me show you the Scripture that explains *the great day of take away*. That's what's happening here. You think it is coincidence that Nephi breaks this fine steel bow? I think this is all part of a divine plan. Look where they're at. They are in the midst of the wilderness where they relied totally upon God for everything to just maintain their live. They're going to come to a place soon to where they are going to have that trust and reliance on the lord to do such things as build a ship, navigate the great ocean to the Promised Land, and establish themselves there. This whole experience of the broken bow is designed to help us put our trust in our heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. Let's go to Helaman 12 and look at verses 1, 2 and 3 to see this great principal of the day of take it away. Verse 1.

Helaman 12:1-3

[1] And thus we can behold (this is a great thus we see statement, and there are 3 of them in a row right here) *how false, and also the unsteadiness of the hearts of the children of men;* (think of the Lehi group right now that we're reading about in verse Nephi 16. You can see that the whole colony has dissolved down the state of unsteadiness.) *yea, we can see that the Lord in his great infinite goodness doth bless and prosper those who put their trust in him.*

And everything that we've read in the first 16 chapters up to this verse has shown that the Lord has taken care of them time after time after time. They're all live; they're all in good health. We haven't seen any death along the trail. We haven't seen any conflict with outside influences. The Lord has carefully and beautifully protected and cared for this little group. Verse 2.

[2] Yea, and we may see (here is another thus we see statement that Mormon's putting in here) *at the very time when he doth prosper his people, yea, in the increase of their fields, their flocks and their herds, and in gold, and in silver,* (in their 401(k)s and their retirement, in their lands and properties) *and in all manner of precious things of every kind and art; sparing their lives, and delivering them out of the hands of their enemies; softening the hearts of their enemies that they should not declare wars against them; yea, and in fine, doing all things for the welfare and happiness of his people;* (That's a pretty good description of the first 15 1/2 chapters of the first book of Nephi, but now watch, something is happening here even to the great patriarch Lehi) *yea, then is the time that they do harden their hearts, and do forget the Lord their God, and do trample under their feet the Holy One* (and why things happen?) *—yea, and this because of their ease, and their exceedingly great prosperity.*

Now they haven't had it easy here, I would agree, and they're not in the process the circumstances they were as they resided in the Jerusalem environments. But the Lord has taken care of them and he's provided them with all they needed, and they are happy. Verse 3. *And thus we see...* Now here comes the great lesson, this is the day of take it away.

[3] And thus we see that except the Lord doth chasten his people with many afflictions, ...

The afflictions leading the Lehi colony right now are hunger and thirst; loss of direction, have no idea where they're at in these wilderness environment, back to verse 3,

[3]... yea, except he doth visit them with death and with terror, and with famine and with all manner of pestilence, they will not remember him.

This is the great awakening that we're looking at coming up. There is a great *day of take it away* on the horizon. What would happen in the United States if there was a power grid failure that covered extensively sections of this country and were to go out for a 30-day period? What would happen if the electrical grid failed in the United States of America at this time? Let your mind settle on that little bit and see what would happen. There are estimates by government agencies that say, that within that 30-day period, 30 million people would perish. What does the Lord have to do in order for us to help put our trust in him? Can I share with you what he taught me one day when I asked him this question, *Lord, why are some of my priest administrations unfruitful? Why is it that I'm impressed by the Spirit to act and yet it appears as though the impression and act remain incomplete and unfulfilled?* Now every priesthood bearer, who's listening this podcast, will relate to that question. Here is what the Lord said, *blessed art thou for seeking to put into practice the things that have been revealed to thee. In this sacred endeavor of practicing what has been revealed to thee, the power knowledge and experience of eternity are awakened and restored unto thee to be used in this estate. Thou hast pondered in my heart why certain ministrations, pronouncements, blessings and promises have not been immediately granted. I will enlighten thy mind concerning this thing; the process of coming from desire to believe to unshaken faith.* Do you see that spectrum there, brothers and sisters? *On the one end is the beginning desire to believe and on the other end of the spectrum is unshaken faith. Can only come line upon line and requires time and effort. The unveiling of eternal truth which is light can be damaging to father's children if not dispensed with wisdom and prudence. The withholding of godly power and virtue is designed, right here, to cause you to further place your trust in me and not in the wisdom and knowledge of the flesh.* This is what is happening in Lehi colony right now with the broken bow incident. They're being forced into placing their trust in the Lord instead of their own arm of flesh. *Knowing that all blessings, privileges, honors, powers and knowledge will be given but in my own time, in my own way and according to my own will. This is the perfect way that faith is strengthened until it becomes unshakable.* This is the lesson that is being set up through the broken bow incident. They are going to have to now learn, in their extremity, to put their trust in the Lord like never before. Back to 1 Nephi 16:21.

1 Nephi 16:

[21] Now it came to pass that I, Nephi, having been afflicted with my brethren because of the loss of my bow, and their bows having lost their springs, it began to be exceedingly difficult, yea, insomuch that we could obtain no food.

I find it interesting their bows lose their spring. Having made several primitive bows, the only thing that could cause bows to lose its spring is: exceedingly use and/or humidity in the air. Since their

living in a desert environment the humidity factor doesn't seem to be too credible. At any rate, everything is coming as planned by the Lord. Verse 22.

[22] And it came to pass that I, Nephi, did speak much unto my brethren, because they had hardened their hearts again, even unto complaining against the Lord their God.

Well, Nephi, I know, is expressing gratitude for all this. He's probably the only one that is turning the Lord in expressing gratitude and because he expresses gratitude with in that format the Lord by law opens up the windows of heaven and pour forth revelation. Here's the impressions. Don't you find it interesting that at this point where Lehi is in a state of murmuring that Nephi still goes to his father, the patriarch and high priest of this little colony, to obtain the word of the Lord concerning their current circumstance? Verse 24.

[24] And it came to pass that he did inquire of the Lord, for they had humbled themselves because of my words; (who's they? probably Lehi and Sariah) for I did say many things unto them in the energy of my soul.

Boy, what a reversal this is. Here's the future leader and ruler of this colony, now, instructing, encouraging, admonishing, correcting and redirecting his father and mother. What a great principle that Nephi teaches us here of respect for priesthood authority. He could've gone and inquired of the Lord himself on whether they should go. Perhaps only Lehi was entrusted with the workings of the Liahona. Perhaps the other members of the colony did not have that stewardship. Verse 25.

[25] And it came to pass that the voice of the Lord came unto my father; and he was truly chastened because of his murmuring against the Lord, insomuch that he was brought down into the depths of sorrow.

What do you think that chastening was like? Do you think it's the parents scolding the child, where they rub the forefinger of one hand over the forefinger another and say, *shame on you, shame on you, shame on you? You know better? How could you be so childish as to fall into the same trap as your children?* Do you think that's what that was? My experiences been that this chastisement took place in the depths of some of the most deepest and sublime love and concern that God had for this great man. I have learned that if the Lord chastises it's not the way we think. It's not with criticism. It's not with accusation. It's not with condemnation. It's simply his great love being poured into you; where in the midst of that love, you come to yourself. You cannot be in the love of the Lord Jesus Christ and the great love of our heavenly parents and remain in a state of contention, bickering, quarreling; all of that vanishes as you are absorbed in the love of them. How glorious is that love to be sought for in times of prosperity or in times of chastisement. They apply the same principle that we read about earlier in section 121. The Lord says, *rebuking betimes when moved upon by the spirit showing forth afterwards and increase in love.* Notice the increase, doesn't say showing forth afterward love, it says showing forth afterward an increase in love. That means the love was there in the beginning of the encounter and all the way through it, but the increase of their love which is there the whole experience puts you in a place where you can never esteem them to be your enemy in any way. Well, they go and look upon the ball and the ball leads them to where they can find food. Verse 31.

[31] And it came to pass that I did slay wild beasts, insomuch that I did obtain food for our families.

[32] And it came to pass that I did return to our tents, bearing the beasts which I had slain; and now when they beheld that I had obtained food, how great was their joy! ...

I would like to think that their joy was great because of the miracle of obtaining that food and not in Nephi's powerlessness with the bow.

[32] ... And it came to pass that they did humble themselves before the Lord, and did give thanks unto him.

What's the saying? All's well that ends well. Verse 33.

[33] And it came to pass that we did again take our journey, traveling nearly the same course as in the beginning; and after we had traveled for the space of many days we did pitch our tents again, that we might tarry for the space of a time.

[34] And it came to pass that Ishmael died, and was buried in the place which was called Nahom.

Look at your footnote on 34b; Hebrew word meaning: consolation, from the verb Nahum, to be sorry, to console oneself. If you will search out the word Nahom on the Internet, you will find some very interesting things concerning this place and even stones having ancient inscriptions on them bearing this name or a derivative of it. Verse 35.

[35] And it came to pass that the daughters of Ishmael did mourn exceedingly, because of the loss of their father, and because of their afflictions in the wilderness; and they did murmur against my father, because he had brought them out of the land of Jerusalem, saying: Our father is dead; yea, and we have wandered much in the wilderness, and we have suffered much affliction, hunger, thirst, and fatigue; and after all these sufferings we must perish in the wilderness with hunger.

Verse 36.

[36] And thus they did murmur against my father, and also against me; and they were desirous to return again to Jerusalem.

Do you see this back and forth, of humility followed by contention and rebellion? Do you see the miracles that cause a change in heart temporarily to where they humble themselves before the Lord and before Nephi, but it never last? Miracles never convert. Miracles simply strengthen those who already exercise faith in the Lord and love him and keep his commandments. Miracles are strengthening to the righteous but condemning to the wicked. Well, here we go with another attempt on Nephi's life.

[37] And Laman said unto Lemuel and also unto the sons of Ishmael: Behold, let us slay our father, and also our brother Nephi, who has taken it upon him to be our ruler and our teacher, who are his elder brethren.

Well, this has now gone to a new level. They've tried to kill Nephi before but now their murderous intent includes their father. This is a whole new level of iniquity and shows us a greater and greater loss of light among these men. They accuse him also of trying to be their ruler, to have preeminence over them. They use the age old excuse that we are the eldest, relying upon the right of the firstborn, when in reality they have not read their scriptures very well; they have not searched the plates of brass or they would have learned that the elder brother, who by patriarchal law as the right to birthright blessings, in every circumstance in the Scriptures never come up to their rights and privileges but always forfeit them because of their sins and transgressions. Verse 38.

[38] Now, he says that the Lord has talked with him, and also that angels have ministered unto him. But behold, we know that he lies unto us; and he tells us these things, and he worketh many things by his cunning arts, that he may deceive our eyes, thinking, perhaps, that he may lead us away into some strange wilderness; ...

Don't you find it interesting that the men are accusing Nephi of seeing an angel are the very ones who have seen an angel who stopped them from beating on Nephi with a rod and gave them instruction and encourage them to go back to Laban's house and obtained the plates? You see a phenomenon involved here that the book of Mormon teaches us. If you don't care what the Lord gives you, if you aren't an active and faithful stewardship in his revelations and in his blessings and ministry to you, bit by bit you will begin to lose what you've had until you have nothing at all. Let's take a look at that over in Alma 12, and you can see this taking place right now in 1 Nephi 16, Alma 12:10.

Alma 12:10-11

[10] And therefore, he that will harden his heart, the same receiveth the lesser portion of the word; and he that will not harden his heart, to him is given the greater portion of the word, until it is given unto him to know the mysteries of God until he know them in full.

Now remember, it's possible to fall from this place. And here is the warning, verse 11.

*[11] And they that will harden their hearts, to them is given the lesser portion of the word until they know **nothing** concerning his mysteries; and then they are taken captive by the devil, and led by his will down to destruction. Now this is what is meant by the chains of hell.*

I have known men, who have a great blessing and promises from the Lord, who were not careful to guard and protect and continually nourish what they have received from the Lord until eventually that whole reception begin to go backwards on them and in time they come to a point where they can remember nothing that the Lord had previously bestowed upon them. I know men, who have written great things in their journals, only to fall away from that and read their journals in their own handwriting and not recognize the person who was recording that information. It is possible that if you're not careful and nourish the light continually that it will go backwards on you and you will lose what you have had until you know and have nothing left. And this is the chains of hell. Middle of verse 38.

[11] ...and after he has led us away, he has thought to make himself a king and a ruler over us, that he may do with us according to his will and pleasure. And after this manner did my brother Laman stir up their hearts to anger.

This is the beginning of what will necessitate a split in this family in order to avoid civil war. Verse 39.

1 Nephi 16:

[39] And it came to pass that the Lord was with us, yea, even the voice of the Lord came and did speak many words unto them, ...

This is a privilege of the holy order of the priesthood that Lehi and Nephi are living. It is a privilege to hear the voice of the Lord, even in his kindness and mercy, speak to those that this experience will condemn instead of edify.

[39] ... and did chasten them exceedingly; and after they were chastened by the voice of the Lord they did turn away their anger, and did repent of their sins, insomuch that the Lord did bless us again with food, that we did not perish.

Well, brothers and sisters, I hope that this is been edifying and instructive. I know that as I teach these lessons there is a percentage of what we record here that I did not know before we actually did the recordings. I thank you for allowing me to do this podcast series, because as always, truly, the teacher is the greatest beneficiary of the Lord's instructions. And I bear this testimony to you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

References:

1 Nephi 16:
Alma 38:12
D&C 121:37
D&C 121:41-44
Hebrews 4:12
1 Nephi 7:19
Helaman 37:38-41
Helaman 37:6-7
Ether 2:5
Alma 37:41-43
Helaman 12:1-3
Alma 12:10-11