

BOM 017 - 1 Nephi 17:1-40

1 Nephi 17:

[1] And it came to pass that we did again take our journey in the wilderness...

It's always been helpful to me to liken wilderness into our experience here in the telestial world. And I find it interesting that in verse one after they again take their journey:

[1]...(they did) travel nearly eastward from that time forth.

The East is the source of the sun's beginning light on each day. It is also symbolic of the light of Jesus Christ and the source of all light, truth and love to us in this world. It would be well for us while we're in our wilderness in this second estate to travel eastward from this time forward with our face toward the Son (S-o-n).

[1]...And we did travel and wade through much affliction in the wilderness; and our women did bear children in the wilderness.

If we will face the Son of God and have our mortal of travel be in his direction we can wade through much affliction in this wilderness, bear it up and successfully complete our journey. Verse 2:

[2] And so great were the blessings of the Lord upon us, that while we did live upon raw meat in the wilderness, our women did give plenty of suck for their children, and were strong, yea, even like unto the men; and they began to bear their journeyings without murmurings.

We'll find out in future versus that the reason they lived upon raw meat was the Lord had commanded them not to build fires. Was this to avoid detection from those who may be hunting this colony because of the circumstances that took place in Jerusalem? Or was this to remain concealed from the robbers and bandits that infested the Frankincense Trail in the general areas in which Lehi and his family were traveling? Was it because there was a shortage of wood along the way?

When we served our mission in Mongolia there was a shortage of wood for fire and so the main fuel for fire was animal chips, horse chips, oxen, yak, camel, dried manure in every ger which is the Mongolian word for the Russian yurt over an open fire. Whatever the purpose was, they were happy, they bore their burdens without murmuring, and the great blessings of the Lord were prevalent among them. The strength mentioned in verse two is the strength of the women and they were strong like even unto the man. I think that's not only a physical strength which surely must increase under these kinds of environmental conditions, but more than that, I think there was a strength psychologically, mentally, emotionally. Great blessings take place when the conveniences that we have relied upon for so much of our life are suddenly taken away. We learn to rely on each other and form me community of strength than to rely upon outside resources. There's a part of me that longs for the day of cleansing that the prophets have

prophesies coming. I can see when conveniences fail, and societies collapse that in the wake of all that it is an opportunity for families to bond together and become stronger than ever before. Remove all the conveniences of our modern society and it compels us to turn more to each other for support, for counsel, for blessing, for friendship. Part of me longs for the day of take it away that is prophesied is on our horizon. Verse 3. Here we go... *And thus we see...* Remember, that whenever you see that. Mormon or whoever's chronicling this event has put that in there as a wake-up; an attention getter. We need to be alert because he's going to summarize an important principle or doctrine for us to be able to sink it deep into our hearts and make it a part of our very beings.

[3] And thus we see that the commandments of God must be fulfilled....

There is a plan, brothers and sisters, you have been called and foreordained to be part of that plan. It's your choice whether you want to fulfill your foreordained mission and destiny. If you choose out and forfeit, because of poor choices in a loss of the spirit, know this; that the plan of God will still go forward. It's our opportunity to be part of this. Our Father in heaven wants us to be a part of it but honors the agency of his children. And if we choose out then someone else will be brought in to take our place, but his commandments will be fulfilled. His plan will be accomplished. Here is a great principle.

[3] And if it so be that the children of men keep the commandments of God he doth (and I want you to circle these 3 Words) **nourish** (circle) **them, and strengthen** (another good word to circle) **them, and provide means** (that's the 3rd one) *whereby they can accomplish the thing which he has commanded them; ...*

You see that harkening back again the first Nephi 3:7; the great theme throughout the Book of Mormon. God does not give any commandment to the children of men save he prepares a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commanded them. Notices 3 words again that represent his part in helping us accomplish his purposes; nourish, strengthen and provide means.

[3] ...wherefore, he did provide means for us while we did sojourn in the wilderness.

I like to concentrate on the word *nourish them*. In this situation we see that they were able to eat raw meat and receive all of the nourishment; all of the necessary things to make their bodies strong and healthy to be able to pursue this course. Margie and I have traveled throughout the world among Latter-day Saints and have noticed the large percentages of our members who are not attending any church activity at all. The number one reason in all of these countries is they been offended. I sat in the office with the mission president in one of these countries and we were talking about the inactivity rate among the members of the church there. With concern in his eyes he looked at me and said, Elder Stroud, how do we stop the hemorrhage? In this particular mission there were as many going out of the church as they were being baptized in; and the attendance rate in this country was 18% after 60 years of the gospel being preached in this land. We discussed that and pondered that at length and discovered something significant. It has to do with the word nourish. If the members of the church are coming into our meeting houses and into our meetings and are not being nourished and fed spiritually; how long will they

continue to attend? The Nephites struggled with this also; this attendance problem, but they knew the answer to it. President Hinckley told us that every new member of the church needs 3 things. The first thing he said was they all need a friend. The 2nd thing he mentioned was every member needs a calling. And interesting thing was, throughout the world, when I would teach this concept nobody could remember the 3rd thing. everywhere I've traveled in the missions that Margie and I served for the church as we taught this principle and related the 3 things that Pres. Hinckley talked about the members throughout the church could easily remember 2 of the 3, but virtually all of them were at a loss to tell us what the 3rd one was. The 3rd one was to be nourished by the good word of God. Now in verse 3 in chapter 17, I think this is a sequence. Notice that *nourished* is mentioned first; then strengthen; then number 3, provide means. I believe that if you are nourished, in the nourishment you will find strength and once you have been strengthened you will be able to provide means or discover means provided by the Lord to accomplish what he wants you to do. All goes back in my mind to nourish. Let's go to Moroni chapter 6 for just a moment. Much of what we read in the Book of Mormon is concerning priesthood leaders and others who go and try to recover those who were members but have left membership or at least lapsed into inactivity. Much of the great doctrines of the Book of Mormon have to do with this rescue. There is no different in our day than there was in the day of Nephi, Mormon, and Moroni. Go to chapter 6 in Moroni and let's go to verse 4. Speaking about people, who come into the church by way of baptism, verse four says,

Moroni 6:4

[4] And after they had been received unto baptism, and were wrought upon and cleansed by the power of the Holy Ghost, (watch here) they were numbered among the people of the church of Christ; and their names were taken, (for what reason) that they might be remembered and nourished by the good word of God, ...

And here's your principal if you would put if statement if the members of the church were nourished by the good word of God then; look what comes as a result of that nourishment, one

[4] ... to keep them in the right way, (number 2) to keep them continually watchful unto prayer, (and number 3) relying alone upon the merits of Christ, who was the author and the finisher of their faith.

Do you see the principle there? If we are nourished by the good word of God, we will stay in the right way; we will be continually watchful unto prayer, growing in the principle of prayer; and number 3 we will learn to rely alone upon the merits of Christ who was the author and finisher of our faith. We will come to a point where there is no one between each one of us and the Lord Jesus Christ which is the ultimate he wants us to achieve while we are in this place. Now in the meantime, we need to have helpers, mentors, guides, directors in the form of prophets, apostles, stake presidents, bishops, seminary teachers, institute teachers, friends, parents and grandparents. But ultimately the Lord wants us to come to a point where there is no one between us and him. You know what he said about that 2nd Nephi chapter 9, that he's a keeper of the gate and he employs no servant there, no not one. These are the blessings and benefits of being nourished by the good word of God. Notice the first one is to keep them in the right way. If our members are nourished by the good word of God, we will discuss what that means, is they won't leave. They will come to the table of Christ every Sunday and will be fed and nourished and strengthened so

that they will feel no need to go somewhere else because they're hungry and are not being fed where they are at. There's only so much nourishment that you can receive under the tutelage of another mortal. They are on their own path and are subject to the fallen nature of this world as we are. The more you draw near unto heaven, the more you seek to have the veil rent. The more you receive from the heavenly realm the greater your nourishment is. The nourishment of the spirit is light, true and the love of God, charity. The more you can do to access these 3 things, the more your spirit is nourished. It is my hope and prayer that what we're doing here with these Book of Mormon podcasts will provide additional light, love and truth through your study of this marvelous record. I pray that each time that we read the Book of Mormon together that you have prayed before you start the study and ask the Lord to enlighten your mind, to quicken your intellect and to broaden your understanding; that you never pick this book up working on approached the Lord first in prayer asking him to help this book become alive to you, more than just words, living manna into your soul. When we do such a thing we are being nourished by the good word of God. And if we do that we will never leave the right way. One of the reasons you will never leave the right way is number 2, you will be continually watchful unto prayer. Notice of this watchfulness follows being nourished. And the 3rd one, which I also believe is an exact sequence, is you come a point where you rely alone upon the merits of Christ which the author in the finisher of your faith. Have you ever thought about that term, *finisher of their faith*? Ask yourself the question, when his faith finished? That's right, it's finished when it's replaced with perfect knowledge. Ponder that in your mind and look again at what it means to be nourished while you're in this wilderness as Lehi and his family were nourished by the Lord in their physical wilderness as their traveling. Verse 4,

1 Nephi 17:

[4] And we did sojourn for the space of many years, yea, even eight years in the wilderness.

Now, if you're becoming a better student in your studies in Book of Mormon you are learning to begin to ask questions? Questions I might ask in verse 4 is: why 8 years in the wilderness? Why not 6 or 10, why 8? Numbers play an important role in the mysteries of godliness. Scriptural numerology helps open up the mysteries of God. The number 8 is a significant godly number. It represents a new beginning, a new order of creation, man's true born-again event when he is ultimately resurrected from the dead and eternal life. And it is also symbolic that 8 in our individual journeys in this life represents the time when one becomes accountable to God for their actions here in the flesh. It's the age now and anciently when God's sons and daughters were invited to enter into the baptismal covenant. The boys in the Old Testament time were circumcised at age 8 days. This then became a token, a reminder in their flesh, that it 8 years they would enter into a covenant with the Lord that would open up to them the blessings and privileges of that covenant relationship. Verse 5.

[5] And we did come to the land which we called Bountiful, because of its much fruit and also wild honey; and all these things were prepared of the Lord that we might not perish. (Are you likening these things to yourself?) And we beheld the sea, which we called Irreantum, which, being interpreted, is many waters.

The many waters that Lehi crossed over is interpreted by most LDS scholars and students in the Book of Mormon as being the Pacific Ocean; landing somewhere on the western coast of either

South American, Central America or North America. Whether it was the Pacific Ocean or the Atlantic Ocean the word *Irreantum* certainly can be explained in both ways as many waters. Verse 6.

[6] And it came to pass that we did pitch our tents by the seashore; and notwithstanding we had suffered many afflictions and much difficulty, yea, even so much that we cannot write them all, we were exceedingly rejoiced when we came to the seashore; and we called the place Bountiful, because of its much fruit.

Again, you can do an internet search on these terms – *Irreantum, Bountiful*, and other terms that will come across that described geographical places; and you can see the wealth of information there. The bottom line is I have not found anybody yet that conclusively can tell us the exact route that they took as he left Jerusalem and ended up in the Americas. To me it really doesn't matter. It's an item of interest and perhaps when we receive Lehi's book, the brass plates and the sealed portion of the plates of Mormon, maybe you will know these things at that time. Verse 7.

[7] And it came to pass that after I, Nephi, had been in the land of Bountiful for the space of many days, the voice of the Lord came unto me, saying: Arise, and get thee into the mountain. And it came to pass that I arose and went up into the mountain, and cried unto the Lord.

You know as we have mentioned before, and it is well known within the Latter-day Saints theology, the mountains are always symbolic of temple places, holy places of great sanctity, the place where mortal man comes up to meet his maker and commune with Him. The (20:11) voice of the Lord here is repeating to Nephi what he spoke originally to our father Adam, when Adam was commanded to awake and arise. That always indicates an upward movement. The same cry is unto us in our day. Those of you who were involved with conversing with the Lord and spending sacred time with him each day are learning about this awake and arise because the Lord will summon you during the 4th watch, between 3 A.M. and 6 A.M., once you've made your commitment to him that you want to be taught of him, converse with him, and receive his sacred secrets – wake up and get up. The awakening bar is much more than simply arising from your bed after having spent a night sleep. The awakening has to do with also being awakened to the things of God. Sometimes when we want to know where a person is in their spiritual progression we may ask the question, is he awakened or doth he gets slumber? Verse 8.

[8] And it came to pass that the Lord spake unto me, saying: Thou shalt construct a ship, after the manner which I shall show thee, that I may carry thy people across these waters.

And I don't know that Lehi and Nephi have extensive experience building ships. It is true that upon the Mediterranean Sea ports, in what is now called the land of Israel, there are some natural harbors there, not many, Joppa had one, the Romans made one at Caesarea. And so being inhabitants of Jerusalem, I'm sure that a lot of their merchants were not only carried cross-country by caravan that they must've also shipped much of it dropped the Mediterranean world. So, although I am sure they must've been aware of shipping, I'm not so sure they were aware of how to construct a ship. Then not only that, this is going to be just any ship. This is a ship is going to be constructed after the manner that the Lord will show them. We see pictures of this drawn by LDS authors and most of them show a regular seafaring vessel much like the

Phoenicians would have used in that day, but the keyword is there; *I'm going to show you how to construct a ship after the manner which I shall show you. That I may carry thy people across these waters.* You might want to circle the word "I" there in verse 8. *That I may carry thy people across these waters.* Looking for symbolisms and how we liken this experience unto ourselves, I found it helpful to look at the ship as a great atonement symbol; and the many waters as the dangers, traps and snares, cunning devices of the devil in this world that seek to separate us from our promised land; something between where we are right now in the 2nd estate and where we would like to be in a promised inheritance of the Lord there needs to be some kind of means prepared by him to get us over these dangerous waters. Remember also in the Scriptures that waters are likened unto people, nations, and societies. Verse 9.

[9] And I said: Lord, whither shall I go that I may find ore to molten, that I may make tools to construct the ship after the manner which thou hast shown unto me?

Notice he says *hast shown unto me* and not *will show unto me*. Up on the mountain Nephi, I believe, has seen in total vision the complete construction is ship. I don't think the Lord laid down the blueprint said sit down on this rock Nephi and take a look at these blueprints. I think that Nephi has seen a vision of the total construction, the sailing of the vessel, its landing in the Promised Land. The whole purpose of the ship from its construction to the fulfillment of its purpose is shown him in vision. This, I believe, is a pattern throughout all the Scriptures. How these prophets and these great men in the Scriptures, including Noah, how do the things that the Lord has commanded them? Notice the Lord says, I'll prepare way for you to accomplish the thing I command you. Could part of that be that they are shown in vision the beginning, right on through the end, of the fulfillment of the task that the Lord has shown them? How is it that Moses could stand where he did with his back to the Red Sea and the most fearsome Army in the civilized world at that time bearing down on him; all of his people are in frantic turmoil, frenzied, frightened, imminent death and Moses stands before them and says, *be still and behold the hand of God?* Where does that come from? I believe that long before Moses stood at that point on the Red Sea that he had already seen himself doing all of this and more in vision so that when the time came; there were no distractions; there was no need for decision-making; he already knew where to go, what to do, what to say and it took place because it already been shown to and spiritually in vision. There are men who are going on missions for the Lord right now in the spirit being instructed by translated beings, tutored and taught in the instrument and the means, that's the word used in the Book of Mormon, the means whereby they can accomplish their mission. These men are being shown by their instructors, their mentors, who are translated beings, exactly how to act in every circumstance. They are shown in real time the mission that is yet to be fulfilled in the future. This is not difficult for God to do because in the dimensions where he resides; Of which there are innumerable dimensions; where all things are before him past, present and future in the now. He can instruct you in your future mission by having you participate in that mission right down to the very details of that experience in the spirit before it actually takes place at a later date in the future in the flesh. Why do this? Because in the future time when emotions are high, circumstances are dire, environment is critical, there is no time to decide what to do. There is no time to be easily distracted by the circumstances around you. You have to act and act now and do so with assurance and certainty that you are doing exactly what the Lord's ask you to do. Make sense to me that would be much easier if you have seen all that right down to the detail in the spirit before you actually participate in it in the flesh. So, in verse

9, when Nephi is asking the Lord about tools to make the ship after the manner look *which thou hast shown unto me* is your key there. He is speaking in the past tense. He is not speaking in the present or in the future. He speaking as though he's already seen the construction of the ship and I believe that he has. Verse 10.

[10] And it came to pass that the Lord told me whither I should go to find ore, that I might make tools.

How much experience Nephi has at this time in metallurgy or manufacturing metal tools from raw ore, I don't know. Perhaps he has some. I know that he has to have some knowledge of working in metal because they're working and inscribing all of their record metal plates. In the wilderness I'm sure that they didn't go somewhere to a metal smith and buy plates. They have to be making these plates on their own from raw materials through a smelting process. So, this tells me that Nephi has some knowledge of working in metals. Verse 11.

[11] And it came to pass that I, Nephi, did make a bellows wherewith to blow the fire, of the skins of beasts; and after I had made a bellows, that I might have wherewith to blow the fire, I did smite two stones together that I might make fire.

(30:09)

I have to tell you something, having been an outdoor survival instructor for many years, striking 2 stones together to create a spark hot enough to start a fire is almost impossible. There are 3 primitive methods for making fire that I am skilled at and can do readily. One is the simplest of them; is a flint and steel fire. This requires that you have steel, the flint in the rock can be found almost in any place in the world; has to be in igneous type rock; but the steel is the trick. If you don't have the steel the rock doesn't do any good. The 2nd form is called the bow drill. A bow drill is a friction fire method where wood is rubbed against other wood in such a way that creates temperature. And in that temperature creates a fine dust that is ignited into a spark, into an ember that then can be placed into a bundle prepared and blown into a fire. I have demonstrated this thousands of times at Boys Scout camps and other expos because it is always fascinating for people to see fire made without a match or without modern convenience. Bow drill fires are very difficult and you will struggle if you look on YouTube or if you go to the Boy Scout manual you will struggle unless there is someone to mentor you and show you the little tricks of the trade that make this possible. The third way is the most difficult of the friction fire methods and that is the handrail. In this there is no bow used. There's no string around the spindle. It is simply 2 sticks; one, we called the hearth, that is horizontal on the ground; and the other was the spindle which is vertical on the hearth; and the spindle is twirled between the hands. This is extremely difficult skill; and very, very few people in the modern world, civilized world, know anything about this. But to take two stones and strike them together to create a fire, even though it's possible, it is so difficult, and the circumstances and the tools have to be so right, that there is no room for any error in this method. For Nephi to do this increases my admiration for him as a wilderness sojourner. Verse 12.

[12] For the Lord had not hitherto suffered that we should make much fire, as we journeyed in the wilderness; (We've talk little bit about that) for he said: I will make thy food become sweet, that ye cook it not;

Raw meat I understand; sweet food I'm not sure I understand. Verse 13, is a great principle. The Lord said to Nephi,

*[13] And **I** (and I circle that word I) will also be your light in the wilderness; and **I** (I circle that also) will prepare the **way** (and I circle that) before you, if it so be that ye shall keep my commandments; (and here is the rest of the principal) wherefore, inasmuch as ye shall keep my commandments ye shall be led towards the promised land; and ye shall know that it is by **me** (I've got that triple underlined) that ye are led.*

This ties back into verse 8 where the Lord said, *thou shalt construct a shipment of manner which I shall show thee*, that this part, *that I may carry thy people across these waters*. I've taken the line and I circle the word *I* in verse 8 and connected that *I* with the *I* in verse 13 to show that tie-in. The emphasis is to teach these people the way he's commanding them to do could not be done without him. There is no taking of any glory or any light unto themselves here. What they're going to accomplish with the Lord's help is impossible for them to accomplish without it. Where the Lord says, *I will prepare the way before you*, not a way, **the** way; meaning that there is only one, not many, ties in beautifully to John 14:6. That says,

John 14:6

[6] Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

Verse 14.

1 Nephi 17:

*[14] Yea, and the Lord said also that: After ye have arrived in the promised land, (look at this) ye shall know that **I, the Lord, am God**; and that **I, the Lord**, did deliver you from destruction; yea, that **I did** bring you out of the land of Jerusalem.*

Do you see what he is trying to teach us here between verses 8, 13 and 14? This ties in beautifully with Proverbs 3:5-6 where it says this,

Proverbs 3:5-6

[5] Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

See how the Lord is trying to guide this group into that principle mentioned in verse 5? Remember the Lord said to Nephi, *ye shall build a ship after the manner that I shall show unto you*. Back in verse 6.

*[6] In all thy ways acknowledge him, and **he shall** direct thy paths.*

Again, *I will **prepare the way** before you and it is **I did** bring you out of the wilderness into the Promised Land*. Verse 15.

1 Nephi 17:

[15] Wherefore, I, Nephi, did strive to keep the commandments of the Lord, and I did exhort my brethren to faithfulness and diligence.

[16] And it came to pass that I did make tools of the ore which I did molten out of the rock.

[17] And when my brethren saw that I was about to build a ship, they began to murmur against me, saying: Our brother is a fool, for he thinketh that he can build a ship; yea, and he also thinketh that he can cross these great waters.

That sounds a lot like the speech coming from the great and spacious building. That may also have been the manner of speech in the pre-mortal world when the controversy was raging, and sides were being formed in the war in heaven. Our brother Christ is a fool for he thinketh that he can build a ship, the atonement; that he thinketh that he can cross these great waters, provide salvation for family children;

[18] And thus my brethren did complain against me, and were desirous that they might not labor, for they did not believe that I could build a ship; neither would they believe that I was instructed of the Lord.

Verse 19

[19] And now it came to pass that I, Nephi, was exceedingly sorrowful because of the hardness of their hearts; and now when they saw that I began to be sorrowful they were glad in their hearts, insomuch that they did rejoice over me, saying: We knew that ye could not construct a ship, for we knew that ye were lacking in judgment; wherefore, thou canst not accomplish so great a work.

This seems to refer to the apparent difficulty, if not the impossibility, under the circumstances that faced them in building the ship for this colony. Have you ever seen anybody rejoice over the sorrows and the difficulties in one of their brothers or sisters? This again is an indicator of the increasing hardness of their hearts. Step-by-step they move themselves to a place where the spirit of the Lord will cease striving with them and they will be left to their own. Nations and societies that come to this point are referred to by the Lord in the Book of Mormon as ripe for destruction. Verse 20.

[20] And thou art like unto our father, led away by the foolish imaginations of his heart; yea, he hath led us out of the land of Jerusalem, and we have wandered in the wilderness for these many years; and our women have toiled, being big with child; and they have borne children in the wilderness and suffered all things, save it were death; ...

This harkens back to the murmurings and the sayings of the children of Israel that were brought out of Egypt as they began to suffer for the want of food and water in the great wilderness of the Sinai.

[20] ...and it would have been better that they had died before they came out of Jerusalem than to have suffered these afflictions.

I find an interesting that Laman and Lemuel and those who are the mouthpieces and this murmuring speak for others. It's easy to speak about dying; easy to speak about dying into your staring it straight in the face. I've heard people say, I would rather die than eat all that wheat, that course food that we have in our food storage. To those people and these people in verse 20, I was say, you have no idea what it's like to be in a situation where you're starving to death. You have no idea what it's like to be in a situation where you are starving to death. You have no idea what you would do in those circumstances. Civility, at that point, flies out the door. Verse 21.

[21] Behold, these many years we have suffered in the wilderness, which time we might have enjoyed our possessions and the land of our inheritance; yea, and we might have been happy.

Next time you read Lehi's dream, and those verses that describe the great and spacious building, come back to these particular verses right here; read them and you'll get a good feel for the finger-pointing, the scorn and mockery that is levied against those who are striving for the tree, and have obtained the tree and partaken of its fruit. No wonder there are some who after partaking were ashamed and wandered away and were lost in strange roads. Verse 22.

[22] And we know that the people who were in the land of Jerusalem were a righteous people; ...

You will see this kind of logic throughout the Book of Mormon whether it's the Ammonites, whether it's the Zoramites, whether it the Gadianton robbers and their chief judges before the coming of Christ; they all professed that they were righteous and that God love them and the man was declaring their unrighteousness is speaking out of the effects of a frenzied mind.

[22] ... for they kept the statutes and judgments of the Lord, and all his commandments, according to the law of Moses; wherefore, we know that they are a righteous people; and our father hath judged them, and hath led us away because we would hearken unto his words; yea, and our brother is like unto him. And after this manner of language did my brethren murmur and complain against us.

Now, there is an interesting phenomenon that take place here. If you are not careful about the words you speak, they can end up being the physical reality in your own life. Go to Mosiah 4:30; this is King Benjamin finishing out his great address and he ends up with these words:

Mosiah 4:30

[30] But this much I can tell you, that if ye do not watch yourselves, and your thoughts, and your words, and your deeds, ...

See that sequence? That is an exact sequence. Thoughts first, words next, and then deeds.

[30] ... and observe the commandments of God, and continue in the faith of what ye have heard concerning the coming of our Lord, even unto the end of your lives, ye must perish. And now, O man, remember, and perish not.

Are you learning to recognize the principles in the statements? *If you do not watch your thoughts, your words, and your deeds, and continue in the faith of what you heard concerning Christ then you will then you will perish.* There is your principal. With all of this negativity, with all this murmuring, with all this backbiting and faultfinding, the very speaking of the word, preceded by the thought, causes the physical reality to manifest itself in your life. This is the principle of King Benjamin speaking. I have a person text me the other day whose text was one continual stream of negativity. There was not one light thought, or happy thought, or positive thought, in the whole text and he found himself it's very difficult and unhappy extreme conditions. I quickly pointed out to him, that's no wonder that you where you're at. Look at how you think and look at what words manifest your thoughts; there all negative. The principle involved here is: is that when God's create, they never use physical exertion in their creations. Their creation begins with a thought in their minds. That thought creates spiritually. Then the next thing they do is they speak a word and that word; when spoken becomes the physical reality of the spiritual creation of the thought. It's the way they create and it's the way they have taught us to create, because, brothers and sisters, you are all expert creators in your own field of progression. You would be amazed if you knew who you really were at the powers, abilities, priesthood power, understanding and knowledge, that you have simply been covered by a veil. In teaching my grandchildren the power of words, Margie did a little experiment where she cooked up some rice – white rice - and then after the rice is cooked got 2 little jars and put the same amount of rice from the same cooked container into each of these 2 jars; seal the lid down tight, never spoke a word, and then took a sign and tapped it on these 2 jars. A sign on one jar was *love*. The sign on the other jar was *hate*; and put them on the shelf and waited. The next family home evening we pulled these 2 out and you could see that already the jar with the word hate on it had begun to turn color. Whereas, the jar with love on it look the same as it did the day that she put it in there. That rice has now been sitting on our shelf in our front room for reference for now 10 months. The rice that had the hate sign taped to it is all dark, black, moldy, crusty and very, very disgusting looking. The jar with love on it; there's not one dark spot to it. It's still white. There is no mold. There's no decay. The interesting thing is: is that it's turning into water and where there was only rice before there is now a substantial amount of water.

There are many studies on the power of words and the effect they have upon our physical being. This is one reason why gratitude is such an important key to our success in this world. There is no complaining, murmuring, faultfinding, negativity or darkness, in any way, in and about gratitude. Gratitude is always filled with light; always filled with the attributes and characteristics of God. And the more we express gratitude, the less likely we are to fall into this trap of negativity, darkness and death. Now, Nephi is going to begin, now, to teach his brothers and sisters using a principal in the Book of Mormon is referred to as *remembering*. He's now going to take stories from the Plates of Brass and from other sources that he's familiar with and rehearse these stories to his brothers hopefully to be able to change their hearts and bring them back the Lord in the state of contrition and repentance. He starts out in verse 23 by asking them if they believed that the Israelite forefathers would've been delivered out of Egyptian bondage if they had not hearken to the words of the Lord.

[23] And it came to pass that I, Nephi, spake unto them, saying: Do ye believe that our fathers, who were the children of Israel, would have been led away out of the hands of the Egyptians if they had not hearkened unto the words of the Lord?

[24] Yea, do ye suppose that they would have been led out of bondage, if the Lord had not commanded Moses that he should lead them out of bondage?

Again, bondage is a great word that I look for and it symbolizes the addictions, the compulsions, the desires, appetites and passions of the fallen man. It symbolizes the chains that keep us bound to a degree where God refers to us as his enemy.

[25] Now ye know that the children of Israel were in bondage; and ye know that they were laden with tasks, which were grievous to be borne; wherefore, ye know that it must needs be a good thing for them, that they should be brought out of bondage.

Again, ask yourself, how does this apply to us? Do you feel tasks upon your back that your laden with that are grievous to be borne? Do you long for some kind of deliverance, some kind of liberation from sin and captivity? Verse 26.

[26] Now ye know that Moses was commanded of the Lord to do that great work; ...

Think about the atonement. Think about Christ - Moses being symbols of each other. After all, Moses was referred to as the great deliverer, the same title that is used to describe the Christ.

[26] ...and ye know that by his word the waters of the Red Sea were divided hither and thither, and they passed through on dry ground.

[27] But ye know that the Egyptians were drowned in the Red Sea, who were the armies of Pharaoh.

[28] And ye also know that they were fed with manna in the wilderness.

[29] Yea, and ye also know that Moses, by his word according to the power of God which was in him, smote the rock, (that's the rock of Horeb) and there came forth water, that the children of Israel might quench their thirst.

Here is referring to the things that Moses did in providing food and water, shelter, clothing, deliverance from their enemies; the very same things that the Lehi colony has experienced from the time that they left Jerusalem up to the present time. This becomes a microcosm of the great deliverance of the house of Israel from Egyptian bondage. Could not have happened without the great deliverer, their Shiloh, verse 30.

[30] And notwithstanding they being led, the Lord their God, their Redeemer, going before them, leading them by day and giving light unto them by night, and doing all things for them which were expedient for man to receive, they hardened their hearts and blinded their minds, and reviled against Moses and against the true and living God.

See that is that example that we read about in yesterday's lesson in 1 Nephi 16 where we went to Helaman 12 and look at verses 1, 2, 3; at the very time when God is taking care of them, providing for their needs, and all those things for in their behalf and welfare then is when Nephi says in the book Helaman; then is when they forget the Lord their God and trample under their feet the holy one. It is just in our nature to do that. The only thing that can keep us from ever slipping into this horrible disease of the natural man is to express gratitude. We need to live lives of gratitude daily and as we did that; then the tentacles of the dark one cannot pull us down into these pits, these traps and destroy us. Verse 31 refers to the word *word*.

[31] And it came to pass that according to his word (first time mentioned) he did destroy them; and according to his word he did lead them; and according to his word he did do all things for them; and there was not any thing done save it were by his word.

When I read that triggers my mind and sends me the Gospel of John verse one.

John 1:1-3

[1] In the beginning was the Word, (now, that is capitalized meaning that this is referring to a person) and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

[2] The same was in the beginning with God.

[3] All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

Go to verse 14.

John 1:14

[14] And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

What is THE WORD? Why it's the Lord Jesus Christ; for his word is truth and light. It is also the rod of iron. We are involving ourselves right now in a portion of the word as we study the Book of Mormon. A greater level of definition of the word of God is personal revelation. More than I can ever remember in my lifetime, we are now being encouraged by our prophet to seek for and obtain the word of God like never before; in other words, seek for and obtain personal revelation. Verse 32.

1 Nephi 17:

[32] And after they had crossed the river Jordan he did make them mighty unto the driving out of the children of the land, yea, unto the scattering them to destruction.

Now, here is a great question, right now, that leads into the marvelous principal the Nephi is going to teach his brethren. Verse 33.

[33] And now, do ye suppose that the children of this land, who were in the land of promise, (the Canaanites) who were driven out by our fathers, do ye suppose that they were righteous?

Of course, they have the records of Moses. They have all the records that are on the plates of brass. They know the story of Moses entering into the land of promise. And they know what kind

of people they were because their record is probably more complete and detailed as to the atrocities of the wickedness and disgusting practices of these people than what we have in our Old Testament. So, he answers his own question; he says,

[33] ...Behold, I say unto you, Nay. (There is the first one)

Those were driven out with a driven out; were they driven out because they were righteous? No. Verse 34.

[34] Do ye suppose that our fathers would have been more choice than they if they had been righteous? ...

There's a good question. We seem to think that because we're baptized members of the church that somehow, we're on a greater standing with the Lord and with our father than those who are not baptized by priesthood authority in this church. Look at the answer.

[34]I say unto you, Nay.

And here's the principle. Verse 35.

[35] Behold, the Lord esteemeth all flesh in one; ...

In the 1828 Webster dictionary the definition of Esteem is to prize; or to set a high value on; to regard with reverence and respect or friendship. With this in mind Nephi's teaching is that the Lord regards. Holds in reference, respect or friendship, or prizes; sets a high value on all flesh.

[35] ...he that is righteous is favored of God. ...

We use the term unconditional love throughout the church. And we use that to excuse our actions in the site of God. Even carried to the extreme that no matter what I do God still loves me; and that is true for his love is not like the love that we defined in the telestial world, however, the key here is he can esteem or love all flesh, but he that is righteous is **favored** of God. And as your righteousness increases that becomes **highly favored** of the Lord. In February 2003 Elder Russell M. Nelson gave a talk called *Divine Love*. In the subheading of this talk it says,

"While divine love can be called perfect, infinite, enduring and universal; it cannot correctly be characterized as unconditional."

I recommend this talk to you by Pres. Nelson where he explains the fallacy that many have in their mind about God's "*unconditional love*." I know that God loves the most abject sinner because they are his child, but I also know that by divine law they cannot be favored with the many blessings and privileges of the gospel of Jesus Christ simply because of their divine sonship were daughter-ship. Referring again to Pres. Nelson's talk speaking of unconditional love, he says,

the word does not appear in the Scriptures. On the other hand, many verses affirm that the higher levels of love the Father and the Son feel for each of us and certain divine blessing stemming from that love are conditional.

I referred that talk to you for your edification. Back to verse 35.

[35] ...But behold, this people had rejected every word of God, ...

That tells you the Canaanites, even though you not have a written in our Scriptures, had had the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ preach to them and were called to repentance. And as the pattern is, not only did they reject the messenger sent to them, but probably in most cases kill them. Again, the records that we have canonized don't give us enough information. But we can pick out these little tidbits of truth by reading closely the words we do have.

[35] ...and they were ripe in iniquity; and the fullness of the wrath of God was upon them; ...

There's that term *ripe in iniquity*; we're going to hear that throughout the Book of Mormon. When a person, or society, or nation comes to that point then the bylaw the next step is that the fullness of the wrath of God upon them.

[35] ...and the Lord did curse the land against them, and bless it unto our fathers; yea, he did curse it against them unto their destruction, and he did bless it unto our fathers unto their obtaining power over it.

The Canaanites at this time are inhabiting the land that earlier times was choice, was holy, and was sanctioned by the Lord; much like the sacred ground in Missouri right now. We know the history and background of that sacred land. So, have all of the degraded evil and wicked individuals who inhabit that land and its surroundings know of its previous sanctity and holiness. Just as Laman and Lemuel reveled in Nephi's sorrow and made fun of him over his words so the wicked have always desecrated holy places once it was left void of the original righteous inhabitants. These are the very places that were ancient alters for holy sacred rights now become the places for ungodly alters where human lives are taken the most degraded way and all kinds of sexual perversion and disgusting filthy practices are practiced to degrade and desecrate these holy places. This is why one of the ordinances performed in the future will be to reclaim and anchor these ancient sacred lands under the Lord Jesus Christ through priesthood ordinance to take them from the usurper, the dark ones, and return them to their rightful heir the holy one of Israel. This is what you see happen here with the Canaanite people. Earlier this land was sacred, now, it's desecrated and defiled. In order for to be cleansed, anchored and sanctified it has to be cleansed from the current wickedness and his face. This cleansing takes place under the leadership of Joshua where he is commanded to go in and among these people and kill all that has the breath of life; man, woman, child, animal. Leave nothing in it that has defiled this land; take it all away and prepare it to be re-anchored, returned to its rightful heir. Verse 36.

[36] Behold, the Lord hath created the earth that it should be inhabited; and he hath created his children that they should possess it.

Here we go, verse 37.

[37] And he raiseth up a righteous nation, and destroyeth the nations of the wicked.

The interesting thing is a lot of these lands currently possessed by the wicked in an earlier day were righteous lands. Verse 38.

[38] And he leadeth away the righteous into precious lands, and the wicked he destroyeth, and curseth the land unto them for their sakes.

Look at the land that Lehi and Nephi and his family are being brought to. Blest earlier to be a Promised Land of the Jaredite, nation at this time in the history of the world, that nation has sunk into gross depravity, murdered, abominations, secret combinations, and have become ripened in iniquity and the fullness of the wrath of God is about to come upon them. We know what that means because we have a historical record of the Jaredites and the Nephites and we can see what happened to that once enlightened people. Once they forsake the Lord and choose the world over the Savior; it's only a matter of time until that nation dwindles in unbelief, becomes grossly wicked, and needs to be removed from the face of the earth. So, it was at the Time of the Flood. So, it was the time of the tower. So, it is at the time of Jerusalem Now. And so, it will be in the coming day for the United States of America. A previously holy land; the birthplace of civilization; the spot of the Garden of Eden; and now the United States has taken its place among one of the most wicked nations of the earth, controlled and operated by modern Gadiantons and secret combinations that seek to enslave the whole world. When we become ripened in iniquity, if we don't repent, then we can expect, as per law and past history, that the fullness of the wrath of God will be upon us. Verse 39.

[39] He ruleth high in the heavens, for it is his throne, and this earth is his footstool.

The footstool is always a telestial world in a probationary state. The Lord's throne is found in the Terrestrial, and His residence is found in a Celestial. And verse 40 ties back to Verse 35, where it says *the Lord esteems all flesh in one; he that is righteous is favored of God*. Look at 40.

[40] And he loveth those who will have him to be their God. ...

There you go; there is the separation of the people right there. Who does He love? Well in the general broad way, He loves all of His children, in a more doctrinally deeper way, He loves those who choose Him to be their God; and He in a higher and deeper level, He favors those people with all that He has.

[40] ...Behold, he loved our fathers, and he covenanted with them, yea, even Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and he remembered the covenants which he had made; wherefore, he did bring them out of the land of Egypt.

Joseph, Enoch, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; all knew the story of Moses. They all knew his name long before he was born. They had seen in vision his great mission. They had seen the deliverance of their children which now had achieved the status of millions, a mighty nation, in

Egyptian bondage; and had seen that deliverance through Moses out of the land of Egypt. They had seen all that. We have remnants of the records that have survived that show us that the deliverance of the house of Israel out of Egypt was well known in detail hundreds and hundreds of years before it actually physically took place.

Well, brothers and sisters, we'll stop it right here. We've reached the time that I would like to have reserves for each Podcast; and we'll finish Chapter 17 and all 18 on our next Podcast. What have you learned from today's study of first Nephi 17?

I teach some people through Skype in various places in the world, the gospel of Jesus Christ out of the Scriptures and after we've had a discussion on the lesson, at the very end, I turn to that person and say, *What have you learned from tonight's discussion? Tell me, What's the most important things that you have learned? What has the Lord taught you? What has the Spirit impressed upon you?* I would encourage you to ask yourself that same question as you look back over what we've studied tonight. Liken it unto yourself and let the ancient experience of our fathers be a blessing and benefit to you in the here and now. I pray in the name of Jesus Christ.

References:

1 Nephi 17:1-40

Moroni 6:4

John 14:6

Proverbs 3:5-6

Mosiah 4:30

John 1:1-3

John 1:14