

04 1 Nephi 1

The Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ

Well hello my friends again, greetings to you from Eager, Arizona. So happy to be here to record this 2nd lesson on our Book of Mormon project. I hope that you had a great week. I hope that your studies of the sacred Book of Mormon have been a blessing to you and have brought you closer to the Lord Jesus Christ. I hope that each time that you have opened that book that you have approached the Lord, our Father, in the name of Jesus Christ to bless you as you read and as you study so that you can have the spirit of revelation and a prophecy. This approach to your study of the Book of Mormon opens up to you the mysteries of godliness. You will see and understand things that you have never seen nor understood before. This will make your study of the Book of Mormon this time unique above all other times because you will be seeking for an intimate interaction with the Lord. This book and its words have power. I want to go over to Alma 31 let's take a look at verse 5 for just a moment. Alma has given up the judgment seat in Zarahemla, and has taken upon himself the full-time ministry of helping his people return to the Lord Jesus Christ. Chapter 31 talks about his mission to the Zoramites. Verse 5 is a verse that really pertains to what we're trying to accomplish as we study the Book of Mormon. Alma 31 verse 5.

Alma 31: 5

And now, as the preaching of the word had a great tendency to lead the people to do that which was just—yea, it had had more powerful effect upon the minds of the people than the sword, or anything else, which had happened unto them—therefore Alma thought it was expedient that they should try the virtue of the word of God.

This scripture testifies to us of the importance and the power of God's word. It was the most powerful thing that Alma could use to reclaim the apostate Zoramites. I find it interesting also that the power of the word and these records that were preserved for us are also mentioned in the Book of Enos. Let's go over to Enos for just a minute and let's look at verses 15 and 16. Now these words are written after Enos has that great experience where he interacts with the Lord, and has a 2nd comforter experience; has his calling and election made sure, and then the Lord grants to him anything that he would ask. Look at verse 12.

Enos 1:12

And it came to pass that after I had prayed and labored with all diligence, the Lord said unto me: I will grant unto thee according to thy desires, because of thy faith.

And look at what he desires. Interesting; what is Enos understand about the power of God's word that we find in verse

Enos 1:15

Wherefore, I knowing that the Lord God was able to preserve our records, (see what his first emphasis there is to preserve the records of his people) I cried unto him continually, for he had said unto me: Whatsoever thing ye shall ask in faith, believing that ye shall receive in the name of Christ, ye shall receive it.

And 16)

And I had faith, and I did cry unto God that he would (look what he wants) preserve the records; and he covenanted with me that he would bring them forth unto the Lamanites in his own due time.

They understand the power and the virtue in the word of God. It's not the eloquence of the person speaking. It's not even the vocabulary and learning. It's the spirit and power that are connected to God's word. When he speaks there is something in that word, it's living, and it becomes something alive and something that can transform, something that can penetrate, something that can change the heart more than anything else in the Telestial world. God's word has that power.

I think about what Brother Packer said 2 years back when he was talking about how we should deal with inappropriate behavior he said this in a conference address in October 1986. *"True doctrine understood changes attitude and behavior. The study of the doctrines of the gospel will improve our behavior quicker than a study of behavior will improve behavior."* Then he goes on to say, *"Preoccupation with unworthy behavior can lead to unworthy behavior. That is why we stress so forcefully the study of the doctrines of the gospel."* See Brother Packer understands that if we endlessly talk about behavior that's inappropriate all that does is encourage more inappropriate behavior. We need to discuss behavior only long enough to identify where the change needs to be made, and once we've identified with that change needs to be made then we go to the word of God. We go to the doctrines contained in the Scriptures and we find the doctrine; we find God's word that addresses that particular inappropriate behavior and we teach that; and there's power in that word.

So when that word is carried to the hearts of the children of men built within that word is the inherent power to change the heart and thereby change the behavior. We continue with our families and with our interactions with others in the church we continue to endlessly discuss behavior problems. Why my children join us in family home evening? Why aren't people paying more tithing? Why can't we get more people to attend the temple? Why can't we get people to accept a call? All of these things we discussed endlessly and that we discussed those unknowingly we simply cause that behavior to continue on and become worse. The power of God has the power to make change. This is why in our studies in the Book of Mormon this year we don't want to even open that book until we've knelt down and express gratitude to our Father in the name of Jesus Christ for the sacred record, and then asked that it be open to us and that the power that's in the word be infused into our soul and make a change. I hope that we're doing that. Always include prayer, pondering and gratitude when we read this sacred book.

Now before we dive into first Nephi chapter 1, I like you go to Moses chapter 6. Let's take a look at verse 63; Moses chapter 6 verse 63.

Moses 6:63

And behold, all things have their likeness, and all things are created and made to bear record of me, both things which are temporal, and things which are spiritual; things which are in the heavens above, and

things which are on the earth, and things which are in the earth, and things which are under the earth, both above and beneath: all things bear record of me.

I like to keep that verse in mind as we go over to now, first Nephi chapter 1. One of the things I would like to be able to learn to do as we study is to learn to look for symbolism, likenesses, types and shadows in the Book of Mormon. There is a wealth of knowledge that is hidden in this book; that will need to learn some skills and some keys in order to open it up for us to understand that. The first book of Nephi has a book heading, there's a book heading and then there's a chapter heading. The book heading right there above where it says *Chapter 1*. And it starts out and says:

An account of Lehi and his wife Sariah, and his four sons, being called, (beginning at the eldest) Laman, Lemuel, Sam, and Nephi. The Lord warns Lehi to depart out of the land of Jerusalem, because he prophesieth unto the people concerning their iniquity and they seek to destroy his life. He taketh three days' journey into the wilderness with his family. Nephi taketh his brethren and returneth to the land of Jerusalem after the record of the Jews. The account of their sufferings. They take the daughters of Ishmael to wife. They take their families and depart into the wilderness. Their sufferings and afflictions in the wilderness. The course of their travels. They come to the large waters. Nephi's brethren rebel against him. He confoundeth them, and buildeth a ship. They call the name of the place Bountiful. They cross the large waters into the promised land, and so forth.

And I'm going to stop just there for just a moment. These words are not written by modern man after the Book of Mormon was translated. These are the actual words of Nephi that were found upon the plates of Nephi, the small plates, probably at the beginning of that and look at the last sentence in the book heading.

This is according to the account of Nephi; or in other words, I, Nephi, wrote this record.

So where your chapter headings have been put in there by general authorities and others this is coming right off of the small plates of Nephi. Now I'd like you to take a look at a couple things and let's see if we can see some symbols, some types, and some shadows that are hidden in this. I know that all of us have read this many times before. We can't be in too big a rush to read, we gotta stop and look, ask ourselves questions, seek and ye shall find. Since the Lord says, "*All things bear testimony of me.*"; perhaps we can take a look at this and see something. Jerusalem means the city of peace. Could this have reference to our pre-mortal life? And as they depart out of the land of Jerusalem, they are now leading the premarital first estate and entering into the 2nd estate. Could it be where as he takes 3 days journey into the wilderness with his family, that's leading the pre-mortal life and entering into the 2nd state of mortality? Go down a few other lines it says the account of their sufferings; they take the daughters of Ishmael to wife. A very important critical step in our 2nd estate existence is to find a companion and enter into the new and everlasting covenant of marriage with that man or that woman. They take their families and departed the wilderness. Could the wilderness again represent the 2nd estate and all the trials and troubles in adversity? Notice the next one, there sufferings and afflictions in the wilderness. Are we in the wilderness? Are there sufferings and afflictions here? (11:54)

They come to large waters. Could that be the barrier between us and where we want to go? Notice what it says - he confounds them and builds a ship. A ship is designed to deliver them over these great waters. Could that ship and then entering into it; could that be a symbol of the atonement of Jesus Christ that carries us over the great waters; in other words says that it takes a little place called Bountiful. Could that represent having overcome the adversities of this life, having become united with Christ, in our day obtaining a Zion? They cross the large waters into the Promised Land. Is the Promised Land the next world where we go with an advantage because we've been faithful in this world? Just something to think about. It's possible for us to miss a lot in our study if we go to fast, if we don't have prayer to start, and we only make this a cursory study, instead of something deeper and more poignant.

Go up the title of the book says, *The First Book of Nephi, His Reign and Ministry*. We've read that before, many times. I want you to underline and take a look at the words - His Reign. The reign always pertains to royalty, always pertains to a monarchy, a king. And his ministry is that of a priest. Could this have allusion to the fact that Nephi is a king and a priest in a patriarchal order that existed in those days? We'll talk a little bit about that as we begin the chapter. From Adam up to Moses there was a priesthood order on the earth called the Holy Order. The Book of Mormon refers to extensively. This holy order was family centered, family centered. Those who presided in the family over this holy order was a mother and a father; and in their progression as they grow in the Lord they can come up and become a king and queen, a priest and a priestess; and some of them, high priest and his wife a high priestess. This is a part of the holy order. And the reason I say from Adam on down to Moses is that's the patriarchal reign we read about in the Old Testament. The last patriarch of the old record is Joseph of Egypt. Now we have men who have that priesthood and minister from that point forward to Jesus Christ but the majority of the people never come up and obtain that level of Excellency in the priesthood. Instead they languish and continue to operate in an Aaronic order which was designed to be a schoolmaster and prepare them for something higher. But this was the priesthood order that operated from Adam down to Moses and Moses wanted to bring all the captive Children of Israel up to obtain this order which holds the key to beholding the face of God. But as we read about in Exodus you can see that the house of Israel rejected that invitation and as a result, in section 84, the Lord says that he took Moses and the Holy priesthood out there midst. And in the place of that gave a lesser priesthood. To get a little better feeling for this lets go over to section 107 in the Doctrine and Covenants and let's go to verse 18, 19 and 20. You can see what took place anciently as is reflected within the organization of the church and in this book the Doctrine and Covenants. Verse 18 section 107.

D & C 107:

18 The power and authority of the higher, or Melchizedek Priesthood, is to hold the keys of all the spiritual blessings of the church— (The Lord can explain what those are, it's a list)

19 To have the privilege of receiving the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, (Don't you find it interesting that the first thing listed in receiving all of the spiritual blessings of the church is to receive the

mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, number 2,) *to have the heavens opened unto them*, (number 3) *to commune with the general assembly and church of the Firstborn, and* (4) *to enjoy the communion and presence of God the Father, and Jesus the mediator of the new covenant.*

Now the Holy Order from Adam to Moses had these keys and privileges to bring to pass this list of things mentioned in verse 19. It was operative all the way up to where Moses becomes the deliverer of the house of Israel. He wants to bring all of those folks, those men and women, up to have the privilege of enjoying the Melchizedek priesthood and all the spiritual blessings the Lord has in store for them. They rejected this and as a result, look at verse 20; they receive something called the Aaronic priesthood.

20 The power and authority of the lesser, or Aaronic Priesthood, is to hold the (number 1) *keys of the ministering of angels*, (that's a connection with heaven along with the Holy Ghost and the Holy Spirit) *and* (number 2) *to administer in outward ordinances, the letter of the gospel, the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, agreeable to the covenants and commandments.*

You see another list there. The Aaronic priesthood has the keys to the ministering of angels; 2) have the keys to administering outward ordinances; 3) the keys that pertain to the letter of the gospel; and 4) the keys for the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. All of that is designed to bring you up. It's a platform. As Paul talked about it, he says, *"It's a schoolmaster to bring you to Christ."* Unfortunately the success of the Aaronic priesthood in fulfilling what it was designed to do throughout history has been dismal.

Let's go to chapter 1, verse one. You're all familiar with this: *"I, Nephi having been born of goodly parents, therefore I was taught somewhat in all the learning of my father;"* and stop there for just a minute. What do you think that's talking about - All the learning of my father? Could that be religious and secular? He's going to need to have enough success in this world in order to take care of the needs of the flesh in the Telestial world. So, I'm sure that includes that, but all learning of my father. Lehi understands how to access the heavenly veil. Lehi has some keys and some knowledge that I'm sure that he passed on that learning and that knowledge to his sons. Now look a little bit further, *"and having seen many afflictions in the course of my days"*. I would present to you, brothers and sisters, that affliction and adversity; can the refiners fire; are prerequisite and necessary in order for you to pierce the veil and obtain the heavenly realm. I don't know anybody, who has obtained those great blessings, that hasn't had to walk through fire. I heard somebody say that the road to heaven passes through hell. I can tell you that my own experience has been that. And that as a result of the things I have suffered as Nephi says, "having seen many afflictions and of course my days" and there's always someone who seen more and I have; but for me, I have been afflicted and tormented and had adversity and loss and tragedy in my life. And for me, at this point, I feel that every bit of that was necessary in order to bring me to the point where I enjoy the things that I do at this point. Now look at the next word, *"nevertheless,"* which means in spite these afflictions all his days, *"having been highly favored*

of the Lord in all my days;” I would present to you that it’s because of the afflictions and how he handled them is that he is *highly favored of the Lord. (20:32)*

Let’s go over to the Doctrine and Covenants for just a minute. If you go to section 122, you’ll see that section 122 was given to the prophet Joseph Smith while he was incarcerated in Liberty jail. Look at your chapter heading: *“The ends of the earth shall inquire after the name of Joseph Smith;”* this part, *“5 -7, All his perils and travails shall give him experience and be for his good;”* You want to see how the Lord refers to the prophet Joseph Smith’s trials just glanced quickly at verses 5, 6 and 7 and you can see it. It is ascending in difficulty and trial, takes one step at a time, and part of it refers to history that he’s gone through or will go through. If you go to verse 7, if you should be after all these things at 5 and 6 list; if you did in verse 7,

D & C 122:7

And if thou shouldst be cast into the pit, or into the hands of murderers, and the sentence of death passed upon thee; if thou be cast into the deep; if the billowing surge (see all this) conspire against thee; if fierce winds become thine enemy; if the heavens gather blackness, and all the elements combine to hedge up the way; and above all, (the capstone of all adversity) if the very jaws of hell shall gape open the mouth wide after thee, (And here is the thing to be learned after all that) know thou, my son, that all these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good.

Now let’s go back over the first Nephi chapter 1 where Nephi says, as a result of his many afflictions in the course of those days, he declares that *I have been highly favored of the Lord.* We’ll talk a little bit about that also in the future. That will be a reoccurring theme. Because all of these men who obtain, and women who obtain, these great blessings and failures and privileges refer to themselves as *highly favored.*

Nephi 1:1

... yea, having had a great knowledge of the goodness and (then look at this) the mysteries of God, therefore I make a record of my proceedings in my days.

You notice the key elements of that first version in 1st Nephi chapter 1. He’s had instruction been given to him by a father mentor. All of us at sometimes in this life are going to run across somebody that can help us on our journey, somebody here in this world, somebody who’s been here a little longer than we have, somebody who’s had more experiences than we have, and are willing to share that with us. That is the learning we’re talking about. We’re going to have many people who will act in the office of a surrogate father and give us information that will lead us on. I will submit to you that Nephi is able to deal effectively with as afflictions, just like Joseph Smith was taught, all these things will give you experience and be for your good, deal effectively with the afflictions because of what you’ve been taught by those who love you and want to help you in your journey. *(23:42)*

Let’s go back over to section 121 for just a minute; let’s go to Section 121 and verse 7 and 8. Think about all these adversities, this is Joseph in Liberty jail, and he says,

D & C 121:

7 My son, peace be unto thy soul; thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment;

There is a great key there. No matter how tough it is, there's going to come a time when you look back on it and it won't seem as difficult and as trying as it was when you're standing in it. That is a good principal understand and then watch verse 8

8 And then, (in other words, when the afflictions over the past) if thou endure it well, (if you endured it well) God shall exalt thee on high; thou shalt triumph over all thy foes.

A couple of lessons to learn in these as afflictions that Nephi's talking about, one is they're temporary and that they don't last forever; and number 2, if you endure them well, then they are going to be a great blessing to you and help you be exalted on high and triumph over your enemies. So it's not really what happens to you, the lesson from these sections and the Doctrine and Covenants, it's how you handle it happens to you. In a previous place in another podcast I said, "These things can either make you bitter, or make you better." Nephi allowed them to make him better. Will we? I've mentioned before that I'm coming from a history where for person to talk about the mysteries of the gospel in my earlier days that is considered taboo. That was really off-limits and you are encouraged not to go there. You are also encouraged to not look into things that are not ... "not important for your salvation." I'm glad that those days are past. I'm glad that we are being encouraged to look into the mysteries, to seek after them, and not set up stakes like the prophet Joseph Smith said, "barriers or boundaries, that this far I'll go, but no further." Then the prophet said, "Only for them to wake up in the resurrection and find out their mistaken; it's too late."

Let's go to section 42 verse 61. This is a verse that was quoted recently by Pres. Nelson in one of his general conference talks. He said,

D & C 42: 61

If thou shalt ask, thou shalt receive revelation upon revelation,...

So President Nelson is encouraging the membership of the church to seek for personal revelation even going so far as to say that if you don't get it, you won't survive the day this coming. Boy, that's a bold statement isn't it.

... knowledge upon knowledge, that thou mayest know the mysteries and peaceable things—that which bringeth joy, that which bringeth life eternal.

I love that Scripture and I love the fact that our present prophet of the church is quoting that to the members. Because look what's contained in the mysteries. This is the first thing that is mentioned in the Book of Mormon is, that Nephi has had access and is learned the mysteries of God. And why is an important, one, because it brings joy and eventually eternal life.

Let's go to Verse 2 in chapter 1, first Nephi chapter 1 verse 2. Nephi says,

2 Yea, I make a record in the language of my father, which consists of the learning of the Jews and the language of the Egyptians.

The language of the Nephites is an unknown language even at the time when they were writing this record they knew that no other people on the face of the earth would understand the tongue they were speaking as the civilization began to grow and flourish. We're told that the record has some kind of a combination of the learning the Jews; and by the way, that's not just language the learning of the Jews is something that Isaiah talks about, Nephi talks about later, it's more than just Hebrew and the language of the Egyptians.

Go with me over to Mormon chapter 9, and let's look at verses 32 and 33; find a little more information is life Nephi would make a note of the language that he's writing these records in. Now this comment in Mormon chapter 9 and we're going to go to verse 32 and 33, to find out if we are going to get a little insight into why Nephi is referring to the language they are using. Now notice that this is written after the battle of Cumorah. Let's go to verse 32. Even though this is written in the Book of Mormon the words are the words of Moroni who was making an abridgment of his father's records adding too things. Mormon is dead at the time that Moroni is writing these words. Look at verse 32

Mormon 9:

32 And now, behold, we have written this record according to our knowledge, in the characters which are called among us the reformed Egyptian, being handed down and altered by us, according to our manner of speech. (Now look at verse 33)

33 And if our plates had been sufficiently large we should have written in Hebrew; (so it's a matter of logistics here that they have developed this language and they call themselves reformed Egyptian, go back to verse 33) *but the Hebrew hath been altered by us also; and if we could have written in Hebrew, behold, ye would have had no imperfection in our record.*

One of the concerns that the Nephi chroniclers have over and over is their concerned that we in the latter days would judge their manner of speech and make fun of it. Look at verse 34.

34 But the Lord knoweth the things which we have written, and also that none other people knoweth our language; and because that none other people knoweth our language, therefore he (the Lord) hath prepared means for the interpretation thereof.

And of course their objects of faith, physical objects, prepared by the Lord to help Joseph Smith to translate this lost dead language because this language, I get the feel it pretty much died out with Moroni. I notice that whatever the Nephi go among the Lamanites, one of the things that they do as they try to bring the Lamanites up to a higher level of standard and spirituality one of the first things they do is teach them or language. **(30:26)** The Lamanites must've had their own dialects, had their own languages; perhaps they altered from tribe to tribe as they do in among the indigenous peoples of the world now. They didn't have a common language that which bound them together, that was tied to their scriptures. I find it interesting that, also, the language

of the Nephites speak is a direct result of having the brass plates that they took with them in the wilderness. They would not have the success in recording their history and having the power and their word if they have not had the brass plates that record. And even the brass plates language, the brass plates that Nephi says here, *that the Hebrew have been altered by us also, and if we could written in Hebrew ye would have had no imperfection*. Interesting things about the importance of the language of my father. Now as we progress on Nephi gives us a little indicator of the time in which he's keeping his records. In verse 4

1 Nephi 1:

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

Now that's interesting that they are living in what was called the *Southern Kingdom* or the *Kingdom of Judah*. The Northern Kingdom prior to this consisted of the 10 tribes of Israel and what was called the *Northern Kingdom* or the *Kingdom of Israel*. Two of the tribes that had an inheritance in the Northern Kingdom were Manasseh and Ephraim. Manasseh and Ephraim are part of the 10 tribes that went north and had those lands of inheritance given to them. The Southern Kingdom is the kingdom of Judah and some of the remnants of Benjamin. It is interesting that Lehi says that Lehi has dwelt in Jerusalem all his days. He's not living in the land of his ancient father's. Maybe his father was somewhere along the line when you have the split time of King Solomon's son, Rehoboam and Jeroboam, where you have this nation split into two different kingdoms of southern and northern kingdom, Lehi, his ancestors had for an inheritance land in the northern kingdom. And yet here's Lehi and his family in the southern kingdom. And there were because there were people who listen to the prophesying of those prophets said to declare the coming destruction captivity in northern kingdom of the Syrian civilization. And that took place and was completed after many years of sallying forth against the northern kingdom warning them all kinds of intrigue. You can see the same things taking place among the nations today. Nations seeking for allies, seeking to pull up with, and become stronger so that larger neighbors can't make incursions upon them; can't steal their wealth; can't put their people in bondage. The same political intrigue that you see today, pretty easy to see it, especially right now, as we're giving this lesson. The G-20 are meeting in Buenos Aires, and a lot of the things that are taking place there geopolitically are the very same things that took place in ancient days. You can look and see the political posturing. You can see the seeking for allies. You can see the seeking for trade agreements. All of these things, the threatening's of war; all this that you see today is exactly what happened then. I'm sure that Nephi's ancestry and Lehi's ancestry left that northern kingdom because they were warned by prophets that if they stayed there they would perish when the Assyrian king and his armies came down and took the northern kingdom. So I'm sure that, if we had the record of Lehi's father and his family and his grandfather you find that they heeded the word of those prophets and left that northern kingdom and came south or maybe even their ancestry never left the Jerusalem area and when there was a split because of the temple of the living God that was in Jerusalem and not the apostate temple was set up in the northern kingdom perhaps his ancestries never have to migrate south. Perhaps they simply stayed

down in that area because of temple worship and because of prophetic warning. The point of all this, brothers and sisters, is that you can look through the Scriptures; you can look around today and see what's happening you get a good feel of what took place with Assyrian Empire; when it carried off the 10 tribes of the northern kingdom into exile; and you're going to see the same thing happening right now. Look at your footnote, its 600 BC, but in another 14 years, the new empire that conquered the Assyrian Empire, the Babylonian empire, they are going to come down and attacked Jerusalem and destroyed Jerusalem in 586 BC. These prophets, Lehi and other contemporary prophets, who were also in Jerusalem at this time, are warning the people that very thing. That doesn't take place while Lehi and his family are in Jerusalem. It takes place after they arrived in the Promised Land. And then they are told by revelation that Jerusalem has been conquered, destroyed and its people carried away captive. In verse 4 where it says *and in that same year there came many prophets prophesying and the people*. Some of the contemporary prophets, who were at that particular time in Jerusalem and in the surrounding areas, were Nahum, Zephaniah, Habakkuk, Jeremiah, and Lehi, and perhaps others. So you can see that when he mentions other prophets we have the records. You can read in Jeremiah the record that Jeremiah's keeping of the same time that we're reading about Lehi's record in these verses.

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

6 And it came to pass as he prayed unto the Lord, there came a pillar of fire and dwelt upon a rock before him; and he saw and heard much; and because of the things which he saw and heard he did quake and tremble exceedingly.

I'm sure among some of the things that he saw there; he saw the destruction of Jerusalem in more detail. He saw that those Jews who were not killed in that great onslaught were carried away captive into Babylon where they would spend the next 70 years before there was even an opportunity for them to return. Whatever he sees in that pillar of fire, I think of that, and I see, I think about Joseph Smith's experience when he says, "*I saw pillar light exactly over my head about the brightness of the sun which descended gradually until it rested upon me.*" This is not the only time that holy men have seen pillars of fire, or pillars of light, and had been instructed in things. Look at verse 7.

7 And it came to pass that he returned to his own house at Jerusalem; and he cast himself upon his bed, being overcome with the Spirit and the things which he had seen. (Now, this is a very interesting thing right here.)

8 And being thus overcome with the Spirit, he was carried away in a vision, (I want you to pay attention to the word 'carried away') *even that he saw the heavens open, and he thought he saw God sitting upon his throne, surrounded with numberless concourses of angels in the attitude of singing and praising their God.*

9 And it came to pass that he saw One descending out of the midst of heaven, (Notice the 'One' is capitalized, God we are talking about in verse 8, is the Holy Father. The One we're talking about in verse 9 is the Son.) *and he beheld that his luster (glory) was above that of the sun at noon-day.*

10 And he also saw twelve others following him, and their brightness did exceed that of the stars in the firmament.

This is a 2nd comforter experience. Lehi, if he has not received the Lord before, now, has that great blessing bestowed upon him; notice it's in a vision; notice that he's lying on his bed when this all happens. And yet when his body is lying on the bed, notice it says that he was carried away. If you are to ask Lehi if he was here and there; he would say, "Whether in the flesh or out of the flesh, I know not", as other prophets of men and women, who had this experience, would testify. The important thing is that he encountered Lord in the spirit. I'd like to talk to you little bit about that because that sets the stage within the first 10 verses of the first book of Nephi for us to come up and have this encounter with the Lord. The gospel of Jesus Christ, the priesthood, the temple ordinances, all of this is designed to bring you to a point where you come and behold the face of God. And in the flesh it can be done. **(40:06)** Before starting the flash, all things are done spiritually, before there physically. This is a law in heaven - that spiritual first and then physical.

I asked the Lord why that was and he shared with me this information. Every encounter that you have in the spirit, no matter how large or how small, changes your physical being. I would never ever have understood that were thought of that if Lord have not told that to me. Because I ask him, why is it that things take place spiritually before physically. And when I asked that why, this is what he told me. The consequence of any and all spiritual encounters, no matter how large or how small, to the degree of that encounter also changes your physical being. There's a change in your body and your physical being when you encounter a spiritual realm. Why is that? Because spiritual precedes physical and changing in your body is preparing you to have these experiences you're now having in the spirit to have them in the flesh and in the world of glory. But the one has to precede the other. That's Moses said in the first chapter of the Pearl of Great Price, and Moses said:

Moses 1:11

But now mine own eyes have beheld God; but not my natural, but my spiritual eyes, for my natural eyes could not have beheld; for I should have withered and died in his presence; ...

You can see in the spirit things that cannot be shown to you physically yet, that's the keyword, yet. The one precedes the other in order to prepare you physically have that experience in the flesh in the physical body.

but his glory was upon me; and I beheld his face, for I was transfigured before him.

This is the same process that Lehi is going through here and that every prophet has gone through. Joseph Smith said more than once when he was caught away, "*whether in the body or out of the body I don't know.*" And that's a good way to describe that because when you're in the spirit it is difficult to tell exactly what's happening and where you're at. And a lot of the people I talked to have said, "Well, I have this experience", and they describe something that took place spiritually,

and then hear them say, “But, It wasn’t real.” And I’ll say, “Why do you say that it wasn’t real? Why are you describing an encounter that you’ve had in the spirit, but you quickly followed up and say, ‘But, It wasn’t real?’” And then we talk a little bit about that and it all boils down to this: we determine what is real in this world through the three dimensions that we live in and the five senses that we experience. If we can’t explain or interpret what happens to us within those three dimensions of those five senses, we say the words, “It wasn’t real.” That it happened to you – yes, but it wasn’t real. Can I tell you that in the heavenly realm, brothers and sisters, that three dimensions and five senses is not even a beginning? Can I tell you that in the heavenly realm is more real there than it is here? When you encounter a being from the heavenly realms, from the other side of the veil in the spirit, that experience is tactile. It’s tangible. You would say, “How can that be tangible when it’s in spirit?” Because in that dimension, in that spiritual realm in countering those who are spiritual beings, notice I didn’t say spirit beings, I said spiritual beings; when you counter them in their world, even though your body is still in the Telestial world, your carried away in the spirit when you encounter them, it is as tactile and tangible as anything you’ll ever experience in this world. When you embrace them you feel their bodies. They kiss you on the cheek it’s just like somebody kissing you on the cheek here. When they hold your hands it’s just like holding a hand here. It’s tactile. We have to get past that barrier of thinking that anything that takes place in the spirit is not real. The three dimensions and the five senses that we experience here, the reality of that is determined through sound frequency and vibration interpreted by organs in the physical body that then teaches what is real and what is not real. None of that is necessary there. Seldom do we get into a fourth dimension, of time dimension, in this world.

But there are many, many, perhaps innumerable dimensions of existence once you get out of the Telestial classroom. So it’s important that this very beginning part in the Book of Mormon that we understand this encounter with heaven while Lehi’s body is on his bed. He’s taken somewhere, notice the words again, notice what he said, *I was carried away in a vision...* carried away and sees heaven and sees God and sees Christ and sees the 12 who will minister with Christ in his ministry and has this great 2nd comforter experience. I can promise you that these experiences that Lehi’s having here changed his physical being accordingly to the degree you encounter heaven there is a degree equal to the changes you physically. You cannot come out of these experiences and be the same physically or spiritually afterwards. Let’s go to verse 11. He’s seeing the 12 come down;

1 Nephi 1:

11 And they came down and went forth upon the face of the earth; and the first came and stood before my father, and gave unto him a book, and bade him that he should read.

Well who is the first there? Look again at the sequence of beings that he sees. First of he sees God the eternal father, then he sees One, with a capital ‘O’ that’s Christ, then he sees 12 others following who following who? Following the One, now verse 11, the first came and stood before my father, who is the first? Why it’s God, the Eternal Father, *and gave him unto him a*

book, and bade him that he should read. What is that book? Well let's go over to Moses chapter 6 and may begin to get a little clue as to what that book is. Moses chapter 6 and lets go to verse 61. Here it says:

Moses chapter 6:

61 Therefore it is given to abide in you; the record of heaven; the Comforter; the peaceable things of immortal glory; the truth of all things; that which quickeneth all things, which maketh alive all things; that which knoweth all things, and hath all power according to wisdom, mercy, truth, justice, and judgment.

Those are the first things that's mentioned there: record of heaven. Now, I think there are multiple meanings to this verse 61. Who could it be that Lehi accessed in this vision; a record of all things and were shown, not only was going to happen in Jerusalem, but did he see the whole history of his descendants; how they became from this small group a mighty civilization that lasted for a thousand years in the promised land? Did he see them flourish? Did he see their triumphs? Did he see their failures? Did he see their eventual genocide where they were wiped out to the man? Did he see the descendants of his older sons Lehman and Lemuel continue upon the face of the earth? Did he see their redemption in the latter days, when as Wilfred Woodruff says, "their chiefs will be filled with the spirit of the God, a mighty nation born in a day?" Is that happening now? Is that a part of the gathering of Israel before the second coming. Did he see all of these things? He certainly saw something pertaining to Jerusalem. Verse 13,

1 Nephi 1:

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

14 And it came to pass that when my father had read and seen many great and marvelous things, he did exclaim many things unto the Lord; such as: Great and marvelous are thy works, O Lord God Almighty! Thy throne is high in the heavens, and thy power, and goodness, and mercy are over all the inhabitants of the earth; and, because thou art merciful, thou wilt not suffer those who come unto thee that they shall perish!

Do you get the feeling that that declaration after Lehi has received this record, after he had been carried away, that pertains not only to Jerusalem but it goes on in the latter days on up to the establishment of Zion and into the 2nd coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. He saw that all while he was carried way in the spirit. Don't you find it also interesting that that whole experience from verse 6 through to verse 14 closely parallels the experience of Prophet Joseph Smith, sees a pillar of lighter vision; he sees the Father and the Son. Angels come, deliver to him a book; he has a book given to him. That book you're reading right now. How wonderful is that? Now verses 15 and 16, Nephi picks up the narrative again and says:

15 And after this manner was the language of my father in the praising of his God; for his soul did rejoice, and his whole heart was filled, because of the things which he had seen, yea, which the Lord had shown unto him.

16 And now I, Nephi, do not make a full account of the things which my father hath written, for he hath written many things which he saw in visions and in dreams; and he also hath written many things which he prophesied and spake unto his children, of which I shall not make a full account.

Well keep in mind that Lehi was also a record-keeper. Much of what Lehi wrote ends up being the mentoring words for his son Nephi. The things that Lehi wrote, referred to by Joseph Smith as, the Book of Lehi and the things that Joseph translated were the very first things, as he began his translation of the plates, as he went through that and completed 116 pages on foolscap Paper; the manuscript that was the Book of Lehi. As you know from the history of the church that was lost, that was stolen, and that's still lost to this day. And so what Nephi is referring to here, Joseph Smith translated at least a portion that was lost to the Martin Harris incident. And so Nephi is now making his own record. The abridgment of the Nephi makes it his father's record is what Joseph Smith translates at the beginning the translation process. I'm sure there was a whole lot that Lehi wrote in order for his son Nephi to make abridgment. And we don't have access to the beginning of that because that was lost in the Lord told Joseph not to re-translate that because of the trap that was set to alter the first translation so that it didn't agree with the 2nd one and therefore to make an effort to show that Joseph was a fraud. I believe in the coming day that the new Scripture that comes forth in the day of Israel will include the Book of Lehi among some of the records or anciently kept, as well as the remainder of the Book of Mormon that was not sealed, what we call the sealed portion. I believe we are in the day of the restoration of these and the translation of these. I believe that we are going to have those things brought to us as a part of the day we live in. I also believe, brother and sisters, that if we take our study of the Book of Mormon seriously and that we look at it differently this time than we ever have, we will lift a barrier that was placed upon the untranslated part of the Book of Mormon when the Lord said, *I will try the faith of my people*. I'm going to give them this match and see what they do with it. I believe that we can through our study the Book of Mormon lift that barrier and move us towards a place where the Lord will give us the rest of the Book of Mormon that was not translated by command by the prophet Joseph. Could it be that our approach to the Book of Mormon this time, in this way, may lift that restriction? What a marvelous thought that is. Well in verse 19 Lehi testifies of things he's seen and he's heard. You go to the bottom of verse 19 and

19 ... and he testified that the things which he saw and heard, and also the things which he read in the book, manifested plainly of the coming of a Messiah, and also the redemption of the world.

Every prophet from Adam has taught of the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh, of his great atoning sacrifice, and the redemption of mankind upon conditions of repentance. Verse 20:

20 And when the Jews heard these things they were angry with him; yea, even as with the prophets of old, whom they had cast out, and stoned, and slain; and they also sought his life, that they might take it away. But behold, (and will in today's lesson on this) I, Nephi, will show unto you that the tender mercies of the Lord are over all those whom he hath chosen, because of their faith, to make them mighty even unto the power of deliverance.

I emphasize, my friends, that all those isn't referring just for the prophets and the holy ones who written the words we study in the Scriptures. It's over all of us, whom the Lord has chosen. Think about what lies ahead of us. Think about the mission the Lord has laid before us. Never before in the history of the world except with Enoch was there a Zion was established society wide as it is to be done in our day. My dear friends, my brothers and sisters, what an exciting future we have ahead of us. How grateful we should be that the Lord has provided us with this sacred record and that he is teaching us how to access the power of heaven and pull those powers down upon us individually. I love the Lord Jesus Christ. He is my friend. I love this great book. It is the key to conversion and the key to the gathering of the house of Israel. May Lord bless you until we meet again next week I pray, in the name of our Savior and Redeemer, Jesus Christ. Amen.