

Ir-BoM-2
“All Things According to His Will”
(1 Nephi 1-7).
By Lenet Hadley Read

(Here is inspirational background)

I. It is important to note when Lehi went into the wilderness what he left and what he took, **all in obedience to the Lord’s will**.

A. “And he *left his house, and the land of his inheritance, and his gold, and his silver, and his precious things*, and took nothing with him, *save it were his family* (1 Ne. 1:4).”

B. After Lehi and his sons went into the wilderness the Lord directed them **to go back twice to obtain the two most essential things --- (1) The word of God and (2) the means necessary to add future generations to his family**.

C. The Lord’s sending them back for the plates shows why the scriptures are essential.

1. The Brass Plates were vital because they **“contained a record of the Jews and also a genealogy of my forefathers”** (1 Ne. 3: 3).

2. The “record of the Jews” was vital “that we may preserve unto our children the language of our fathers” (1 Ne. 3:19).

3. The “record of the Jews” was also vital because “we may **preserve unto them the words which have been spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets, which have been delivered unto them by the Spirit and power of God, since the world began, even down unto this present time**” (1 Ne. 3:20).

4. The “record of the Jews” was so vital Nephi is actually commanded to slay Laban to obtain them. The Spirit expressly tells Nephi, “Behold the Lord slayeth the wicked to bring forth his righteous purposes. It is *better that one man should perish than that a nation should dwindle and perish in unbelief.*”

“And now when I, Nephi, had heard these words, I remembered the words of the Lord which he spake unto me in the wilderness, saying that: Inasmuch as thy seed shall keep my commandments, they shall prosper in the land of promise.

Yea, and I also thought that they could not keep the commandments of the Lord according to the law of Moses, save they should have the law, And I also knew that the law was engraven upon the plates of brass” (1 Ne. 4:13-16).

5. When Lehi reviewed the Brass Plates, they found they contained the following, each portion being very important.

a. “The five books of Moses which gave an account of the creation of the world and also of Adam and Eve, who were our first parents (1 Ne 5:11).”

b. “And also a record of the Jews from the beginning, even down to the commencement of the reign of Zedekiah, king of Judah (1 Ne 5:12).”

c. “And also the prophecies of the holy prophets, from the beginning, even down to the commencement of the reign of Zedekiah (1 Ne. 5:13).”

d. “And also many prophecies which have been spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah (1 Ne. 5:13).

e. “And it came to pass that my father ... found upon the plates of brass a genealogy of his fathers; wherefore he knew that he was a descendant of Joseph, yea, even that Joseph ... who was sold into Egypt, and **who was preserved by the**

hand of the Lord, that he might preserve his father, Jacob, and all his household from perishing with famine” (1 Ne. 5:14).

1. This knowledge was important because it helped them to understand prophecy concerning Joseph’s seed. For **these descendants of Joseph would do the same thing that Joseph himself did --- keep all of the House of Israel from perishing from famine.** The record they kept would come forth in the Latter-days and would help gather scattered Israel, giving them the spiritual truths needed to be revived as a people from spiritual famine.

6. After searching the plates, they **“found that they were desirable; yea even of great worth unto us, insomuch that we could preserve the commandments of the Lord unto our children”** (1 Ne. 4:21).

7. Contrast the strength which the Nephites received from the Brass Plates as opposed to the Mulekites, who had brought no records with them.

a. **“their language had become corrupted; ... and they denied the being of their Creator; ...”** (Omni 1:17).

II. There is evidence that the ancient place where Lehi lived, near Jerusalem, has likely been discovered. The place of its discovery gives further evidence of why “The Word of God” which Lehi took into the wilderness, **and added upon,** was so vital. See * below for details.

III. Lehi’s sons were also sent back to **obtain wives for future posterity.**

A. “And now... the Lord spake again saying, that it was not meet for [Lehi]... that he should take his family into the wilderness alone; but that his sons should take daughters to wife, that they might raise up seed unto the Lord in the land of promise” (1 Ne. 7:1).

1. The Family Proclamation reminds why God would provide for this great need.

“We ...solemnly proclaim that marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God and that the family is central to the Creator’s plan for the eternal destiny of His children.....

B. “Although the focus of [The Book of Mormon] is on the national level, one sees much of family life and relationships. **The Book of Mormon is the most family-oriented book we have in the standard works.**” (Arthur R. Bassett, *It Begins with a Family*).

C. Elder Neil L. Anderson further illuminated how the Book of Mormon focuses on families and can strengthen families in our day.

1. “The Book of Mormon invites us and our families to embrace faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and it shares the principles that will help our families succeed....This spiritually powerful, convincing testimony that Jesus Christ is indeed the promised Messiah—the anointed Son of God, sent to earth to bring about the resurrection of all men and the spiritual cleansing of those who will repent and follow Him—is framed within the history of families.”

***The House of Lehi has likely been found, showing the importance of the Word.**

In 1961, wheels of an Israeli military bulldozer sank into the top of an underground cavern outside Jerusalem. Subsequent excavations showed a very large community once existed in the area. Its beginnings date to 700-600 B.C.

This site is about 17 miles southwest of Jerusalem. Note that Lehi is said to have lived

“at” Jerusalem, not “in” it, leaving in 600 B.C. Live interviews of Bedouins who share their tradition that before Mohammed **there was a prophet named Lehi who lived there** can be found on YouTube under the title "Beit Lehi." (Meaning “House of Lehi”).

The Bedouins say this Lehi warned the Jews and people of Ishmael of difficult times to come. Then he disappeared. No one knew where he went. When standing at the top of a hill where the site was found, they said it was a very sacred place. Josephus in his history, *Antiquities* (7:12:4), also speaks of a **mountain of Lehi**.

Such traditions are consistent with the life of Lehi as told in *The Book of Mormon*. A prophet named Lehi, a very wealthy man, did live near Jerusalem. He did warn about the coming destruction of the Babylonians. And he did disappear -- to come to the Americas with his family.

Nothing was done about this newly discovered site until recent years. Elder Hartman Rector Jr. and the House of Lehi Foundation have encouraged and financially helped excavation. The excavations themselves have been carried out by Israeli archaeologists.

There are inscriptions carved on the rock walls. One has several phrases praising Yahweh, and several other phrases pleading with Him to remember and help Jerusalem.

Other things discovered are an extremely large and well preserved olive press and a room for olive oil storage. Right next to them was a mikvah or place for a ritual bath. A large Columbarium with dovecotes for 2200 birds was there. [These are holes in the rock walls for pigeons/doves to nest] They were raised to sell for food or for sacrifice.

Of course, Lehi left in 600 B.C., and the place later was inhabited by others.

Significantly, the Israeli archaeologists link this site to Samson, referring to the story in Judges 15, where Samson, once conquered by the Gentiles, is said to have been revived by water drunk from the jawbone of an ass at a place named Lehi where there is a spring (verse 19). *Samson overcame the power of the Gentiles with water drunk from this spring and with this jawbone.*

Some prominent Biblical scholars (such as Irenaeus and John Foxe) believed Samson in many ways was a “type” of Christ, and felt this “**jawbone**” **represented the word of God, which would re-awaken Israel to its spiritual heritage after Jesus’ death.**

In fact, the **name "Lehi "means jawbone or cheek.** Samson’s story was prophecy that Israel would first be overcome by the Gentiles, (This occurred physically when the Romans took the Jews captive. It occurred spiritually when the Gentiles received the Gospel and the leadership of Christ’s church). However, in time, Samson's story added prophecy that *Israel would receive back its inheritance, revived by the word of God.*

Samson’s story also reveals the specific “word of God” which would revive Israel would come through the prophet Lehi, from him and his descendants.

Lehi did not disappear from the sight of God, only from sight of those in the Old World. But he left an archaeological record of his existence there, which has now likely been discovered.

Fulfillment supports prophecy. And the truth is that because of the *Book of Mormon*, Israel has received back the blessings of the Gospel from the Gentiles.

Only Latter-day Saints would understand why the word of God that revives Israel truly is connected to the “living spring” and the “jawbone” of Lehi.