

Teacher's Supplement – Lehi Receives a Blessing of a Land of Promise

PROCEDURE

Motivation/Introduction (7-10 minutes)

Background Information located on pages below.

Lesson Development (30 minute-sessions)

Assign highlighted scriptures and any other scriptures of the teacher's choice to participants prior to class, to be read at the appropriate time during execution of the lesson.

Overview of the Journey to the Promised Land

Time: Circa 630-600 BC.

Place: Jerusalem.

Setting: Prophets such as Jeremiah, Daniel, and Ezekiel were prophesying about the coming of the Messiah- the son of God, as well as admonishing the Jews to repent of their wickedness and unbelief, foretelling of pending destruction if they would not turn from their wickedness.

A Jew, named Lehi, hearing the words of the prophets, took them to heart and prayed for his people with all the energy of his soul. The Lord appeared to Lehi in a pillar of fire upon a rock showing and telling Lehi many things that caused him to tremble and shake exceedingly. Upon returning to his tent, God gave Lehi many visions and prophetic revelations. Lehi saw a vision of the Messiah, Jesus Christ, descending from heaven (1 Nephi 1:6-9). Lehi joined the cause to save the Jews, prophesying to his people to believe and repent. His message was ill-received and his life threatened.

The Lord, however, was pleased with Lehi's faithfulness and rewarded him with a blessing. God commanded Lehi to take his family and flee into the wilderness to preserve their lives.

Believing God, Lehi packed up his family and necessities for the journey and left Jerusalem. They traveled a three-day journey from Jerusalem to a place of relative safety (1 Nephi 2:6).

God spoke to Lehi in a dream, telling him to send his sons back to Jerusalem to obtain sacred records on brass plates (1 Nephi 3:2-4). These brass plates, as they were called, were not easily obtained, but through the power of God, the task was accomplished. The young men – Laman, Lemuel,

Sam, and Nephi – returned safely from Jerusalem to the wilderness camp of their parents. A stranger, named Zoram, had joined their party. He was the servant of the keeper of

the plates and the only witness of what had occurred. They persuaded him to travel with them to keep their departure hidden from the Jews.

Q. Why were these sacred records beneficial to the people of Lehi? (They contained the Commandments of God, the prophecies of God, the history of God's dealings with His people and a genealogy of Lehi's family, 1 Nephi 5:11-19).

Explain: The Lord's plan for this family was to develop them into a nation of people, in the Land of Promise, who would be a righteous branch of Israel and blessed in serving Him.

Once again, God commanded Lehi to send his sons back to Jerusalem to persuade another family, Ishmael's, to travel with them. Ishmael had sons and daughters which allowed the two families to unite into husbands and wives (1 Nephi 7:1-5).

Rhetorical questions: Now that these families were united were they ready to proceed on their journey? How will they know the way?

The Lord provided a compass or guide which was called Liahona which was described as a brass ball with two spindles- one of which would point the direction to travel- having the ability to give written instruction (1 Nephi 16:10, 26).

Q. How did this instrument work?

*It was an instrument that worked by **faith and diligence** to the instructions received (1 Nephi 16:28, 29). When the people placed their faith in the Lord and were obedient to His Commandments, the Liahona pointed the direction in which they should travel and taught them the ways of the Lord. When the people were not faithful, it failed to work and gave serious messages of warnings.*

The company of people traveled eight years through the wilderness following the guidance of the Liahona (1 Nephi 17:4). It had led them to a land of many waters full of fruit and honey.

Rhetorical question: Had they arrived at the Land of Promise?

Explain: Nephi, Lehi's son, who was chosen by God to be the spiritual leader for the family (1 Nephi 2:22), was commanded to build a ship to cross the waters (1 Nephi 17:7, 8). The blessing that the Lord gave Lehi was to extend beyond the current shore to another continent, a Land of Promise, which was across the waters. (1 Nephi 10:13-14)

Being faithful to God's Commandments and overcoming great resistance by his siblings, Nephi completed the task of shipbuilding and the party embarked on their journey to the land of promise (1 Nephi 17:47-50).

The journey took many days, being driven by the wind, and being led by the Liahona. When they arrived in the Promised Land, they explored the wilderness and found that it was stocked with many wild and tame animals and was rich in raw minerals. It was a choice land in which to live (1 Nephi 18:23-25, Helaman 6:10, 11)).

Explain: In God's mysterious way, and unbeknown to the existing inhabitants of the world, God safely removed and preserved this small company of people from their mother land, Jerusalem, to a new land, a promised land, for their inheritance which provided for them a safe environment in which to live and develop into a great nation of people with the expectation that they would serve God.

Continue:

Demonstrating the faithfulness of God and how He is true to His Word, God revealed this great mystery and more yet to come to Joseph of Egypt, read 2 Nephi 3:4-5.

Q. What eventually happened to Jerusalem? (The Babylonian Empire besieged Jerusalem and many were taken captive into other nations. Jerusalem and its people were destroyed as the prophets had foretold.)

Q: (Identify the land of promise more specifically.) Where is the land where Lehi settled? (Somewhere in the Western Hemisphere, possibly in what is currently known as Central or South America.

Explain: The ancient artifacts (gold plates and interpreters) were discovered in the Western Hemisphere. The gold plates were translated and published as *The Book of Mormon*.

Q. What blessings associated with this Land of Promise? (It was choice above all other lands since the waters receded from upon it; God had preserved it for a righteous people; the inhabitants must serve God or be swept off from the land; it is a land of liberty) (2 Nephi 1:7, 9 Ether 2:7-10, 12, Ether 13:2)

Q. When may the descendants of Joseph, Lehi's family, have arrived in the Western Hemisphere? (Possibly around 590-589 BC Considering the eight-year journey through the wilderness, the many days spent at the shore, the time it took to build the ship, and the many days to cross the waters to reach the Promised Land, we might be able to estimate roughly 10 - 11 years from the time Lehi left Jerusalem to the time they arrived and settled in the Promised Land - circa 591 - 589 BC. [**Compare this date with Nebuchadnezzar's final invasion and annihilation of Jerusalem.**])

Lehi saw in a vision that Jerusalem had been destroyed after arriving in the Land of Promise.

Read 2 Nephi 1:4-5, "For, behold, said he, I have seen a vision, in which I know that Jerusalem is destroyed; and had we remained in Jerusalem we should also have perished." "But, said he notwithstanding our afflictions, we have obtained a land of promise, a land which is choice above all other lands; a land which the Lord God hath covenanted with me should be a land for the inheritance of my seed. Yea, the Lord hath covenanted this land unto me, and to my children forever, and also all those who should be led out of other countries by the hand of the Lord.

Explain: The Church of Jesus Christ believes that the Native People of the Americas are descendants of the House of Israel: some are descendants of Joseph - having descended from Lehi, some are descendants of Judah - having descended from Mulek; some are descendants of Zoram, and Ishmael's daughters; and other tribes of Israel may be represented in the Americas - of which we cannot identify specifically because we do not have a history of their ancestry yet.

Explain: that this land is a land of inheritance for "all those who should be led out of other countries by the hand of the Lord," which includes all nations of people who have come to the Americas over the course of years, including the Gentiles.

Life Application (15 minutes)

Assignment located on pages below.

Sample list:

Lehi's Family's Journey

- The journey took place during perilous times
- God let the people of Lehi (1 Nephi 17:13)
- The Spiritual leaders (Lehi and Nephi) were led by divine revelation
- Their journey required great faith - many unknowns

- The journey required preparation – spiritual and natural
- Their journey required effort
- Their journey required perseverance through trials (1 Nephi 17:47 – 50)
- Willingness to take risks
- Their journey required diligence in following God's Word and completing the tasks along the way
- Their journey required focus on obtaining the promise
- The journey required praising God through trials (1 Nephi 18:16)
- The people encountered trials
- God provided for their needs
- God sent a compass to guide them
- Some murmured and complained along the way
- Some doubted the Word of God
- Some did not believe Jerusalem would be destroyed.
- Some rose up as spiritual leaders.
- Some needed chidings along the way
- They obtained the land of promise.

Background Information (for Teacher) - Events Around Lehi's Days in Jerusalem

References 2 Kings chapters 22-25, 2 Chronicles chapters 34-36, Daniel 1:1-6, Ezekiel 1:1-3, Jeremiah 1:1-3, 1 Nephi 1:4, Helaman 6:10

Helaman 8:20-22

Note: Dates are as accurate as can be interpreted using the Bible and The Book of Mormon scriptures.

Circa 643-642 BC

- **Josiah (Righteous King)** became king of Judah at age 8 years. His throne was in Jerusalem. **Reigned 31 years**
- Age sixteen he began seeking after the God of David
- Age 18, Josiah realized the sins of the previous kings of Judah when the book of the law was read to him. Josiah repented and told the priests and scribes to inquire what the Lord will do because of the sins of the Jews. They sought a prophetess name Huldah who told them God was very angry because of the disobedience of their fathers. He intended to bring evil upon all of Judah and Jerusalem because they have burned incense to other gods (broke the first and second commandments). The land would become desolation and a curse.
- Josiah humbled himself before the Lord and called for all the people to humble themselves. He made a covenant to keep the Commandments of God.
- Josiah commanded the high priests to destroy everything and anything associated with idolatry from the land of Israel. They burned idols, houses, gates, groves, bones of the people who were offered to the god Molech, tore down the high places that Solomon had built to other gods, etc. He ordered all the priests who practiced idolatry to be killed as well as wizards and soothsayers. (The idols had been in place for hundreds of years, offending the Lord God.)
- He held a Passover feast for all the people
- God promised Josiah that he would live in peace and not see the annihilation of the people and the land.

[Teacher read]: 2 Kings 23:25-27, "And like unto him was there no king before him, that turned to the Lord with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; neither after him arose there any like him."

"Notwithstanding the Lord turned not from the fierceness of his great wrath, wherewith his anger was kindled against Judah, because of all the provocations that Manasseh had provoked him withal." "And the Lord said, I will remove Judah also out of my sight, as I have removed Israel, and will cast off this city Jerusalem which I have chosen, and the house of which I said, My name shall be there."

Circa 629 BC

- **Jeremiah**, the prophet is living in Jerusalem (son of Hilkiah who was high priest in Josiah's reign to Zedekiah's reign)

Circa 612 BC

- **Jehoahaz (Evil King)**, son of Josiah, succeeded his father at age 23.
- **Reigned three months** when King of Egypt dethroned him and placed his brother in his stead (**1st raid on Jerusalem since days of Josiah**)
- **Eliakim (Evil King)**, brother of Jehoahaz, began reign at age 25. **Name changed to Jehoiakim** by the King of Egypt; **reigned 11 years**

Circa 609 BC

- **Nebuchadnezzar raided Jerusalem in the 3rd year of Jehoiakim's reign. (2nd raid on Jerusalem)** During the third year of the Jehoiakim's reign, carried into Babylon were: Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.
- Jehoiakim rebelled so God sent bands of the Chaldees, Syrians, Moabites, and Ammorites against Judah to destroy it. Nebuchadnezzar carried Jehoiakim captive into Babylon.

Circa 601 - 600BC

- **Jehoiachin (Evil King) succeeded Jehoiakim** at the age of eight years (2 Chronicles 36:9) or 18 years (2 Kings 24:8) old. **3 month reign**

- Nebuchadnezzar took Jehoiachin, his family, servants, officers, and treasures from Solomon's temple and from the king's house as well as all the princes and mighty men of valor and craftsmen into Babylon. Ezekiel was in captivity by the fifth year of reign. (**3rd raid on Jerusalem**)
- **Nebuchadnezzar placed Mattaniah**, Jehoiachin's uncle **on the throne** over Judah and **changed his name to Zedekiah**

600 BC

- **Zedekiah (Evil King)** was 21 years old when he began to reign. Zedekiah hardened his heart against the Lord. Chief priests transgressed greatly, the temple in Jerusalem was polluted.

[Teacher read]: 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.

- **Lehi had a vision of the pillar of fire on the rock**

[Teacher read]: 2 Chronicles 36:15-16, "And the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place: "But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy.

[Teacher read]: 1 Nephi 1:18-20, "Therefore, I would that ye should know, that after the Lord had shown so many marvelous things unto my father, Lehi, yea, concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, behold he went forth among the people, and began to prophesy and to declare unto them concerning the things which he had both seen and heard." "And it came to pass that the Jews did mock him because of the things which he testified of them; for he truly testified of their wickedness and their abominations; 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." "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, 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."

600 BC

- **Lehi left Jerusalem** (eight-year journey through the wilderness- southward along the Red Sea and eastward to a land of many waters where they embarked for the Promised Land)

Circa 591-589 BC

- **During the 9th year of Zedekiah's reign**, Nebuchadnezzar came to Jerusalem with his whole host of army, built forts around the city and attacked (**4th raid on Jerusalem**). **By the 11th year of the reign of Zedekiah, Jerusalem fell** into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar.
- **Famine prevailed in Jerusalem. The city was left in ruins. The army and the king, tried to escape by night**, fleeing in different directions. The Chaldees were encamped round about and **King Zedekiah was captured**. He was tried before the King. **Nebuchadnezzar ordered the slaying of Zedekiah's children before his eyes**, then poked out his own eyes, shackled him in chains and carried him to Babylon. (**Mulek, son of Zedekiah, escaped and was brought to the Promised land – people of Zarahemla – Circa 589 BC or earlier**)

Circa 588 BC

- Nineteenth year of **Nebuchadnezzar's** reign, he **sent his army into Jerusalem to burn the king's houses, the temple, and the noblemen's houses**. His army **broke down the walls of Jerusalem** and **carried the remainder of the people into Babylon, except the very poor** (**5th raid and the overthrow of Jerusalem**).
- **Zedekiah reined a total of eleven years.**

Assignment – Parallels with Lehi’s Family’s Journey to the Promised Land

Compare Lehi’s family’s journey to the promised land to the people of God’s journey to the promised land in modern times. What life lessons can be learned from their experience to help us on our journey?

Lehi’s Family’s Journey	People of God’s Journey Today