

## 7. The Journey Resumed

1 Nephi 15:1–18:25

“And we did travel and wade through much affliction in the wilderness . . . And thus we see that the commandments of God must be fulfilled. And if it so be that the children of men keep the commandments of God he doth nourish them, and strengthen them, and provide means whereby they can accomplish the thing which he has commanded them; wherefore, he did provide means for us while we did sojourn in the wilderness.” (17:1-3)

## “Redeemer of Israel” (Hymn 6)

Redeemer of Israel, our only delight,  
On whom for a blessing we call,  
Our shadow by day and our pillar by  
night,  
Our King, our deliv'rer, our all!

We know he is coming to gather his  
sheep  
And lead them to Zion in love,  
For why in the valley of death should  
they weep  
Or in the lone wilderness rove?

How long we have wandered as  
strangers in sin,  
And cried in the desert for thee!  
Our foes have rejoiced when our  
sorrows they've seen,  
But Israel will shortly be free.

As children of Zion, good tidings for  
us.  
The tokens already appear.  
Fear not, and be just, for the kingdom  
is ours.  
The hour of redemption is near.

## Nephi Teaches His Brothers (15:1–29)

- The Disputation over the Dream (15:1–11)
  - Nephi's **narrative** introduction of his teaching his brothers
  - **Disobedience precludes understanding**
    - Nephi's brothers dispute the meaning of Lehi's dream (15:1–4)
    - Nephi preaches the necessity of inquiring of the Lord (15:5–11)
- Nephi's Teaching (15:12–29)
  - Originally a **sermon**, Nephi recounts this largely in narrative format
  - Nephi's **exhortation** following his vision parallels Lehi's sermon in chapter 10 that had followed his dream in chapter 8
  - Topics
    - Nephi Explains **the Allegory of the Olive Tree** (15:12–20)
    - Nephi Explains **the Symbolism of the Tree of Life Vision** (15:21–29)
    - Nephi Explains **the Justice of God**: Judgment, Hell, and the Kingdom of God (15:30–36)

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## Nephi's Explains the Allegory of the Olive Tree (15:12–20)

- **Allegory**: the expression of truth by means of symbolic figures and actions; an extended comparison or simile
- Type of Israel, **rejection of the wicked** and **grafting in of righteous Gentiles**
  - Lehi first mentioned the **allegory** in his sermon in 1 Nephi 10:12–14
  - We get the full original allegory of the Brass Plates prophet Zenos in Jacob 5
- Israel and the Gentiles
  - "Behold, I say unto you, that the house of Israel was compared unto **an olive-tree** . . . and behold are we not broken off from the house of Israel, and are we not a branch of the house of Israel? . . . in the latter days . . . shall the fulness of the gospel of the Messiah come unto the Gentiles, and from the Gentiles unto the remnant of our seed—And at that day shall the remnant of our seed know that **they are of the house of Israel**, and that they are **the covenant people of the Lord**; and **then shall they know and come to the knowledge of their forefathers**, and also **to the knowledge of the gospel of their Redeemer** . . ." (1 Nephi 15:12–14, note title page purposes!)

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## The Imagery of Tree, Rod, and River (15:21–29)

- “What meaneth **the tree** which he saw?” (15:21)
  - “And I said unto them: **It was a representation of the tree of life.**” (15:22)
- “What meaneth **the rod of iron** which our father saw, that led to the tree?” (15:23)
  - “And I said unto them that **it was the word of God**; and whoso would hearken unto the word of God, and would hold fast unto it, they would never perish; neither could the temptations and the fiery darts of the adversary overpower them unto blindness, to lead them away to destruction.” (15:23–24)
- “What meaneth **the river of water** which our father saw?” (15:26)
  - “And I said unto them that **the water which my father saw was filthiness** . . . it was an awful gulf, which separated the wicked from the tree of life, and also from the saints of God. And I said unto them that it was a representation of that awful hell, which the angel said unto me was prepared for the wicked.” (15:27–29)

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## Nephi Explains the Justice of God Judgment, Hell, and the Kingdom of God (15:30–36)

- Division of the **Wicked** from the **Righteous** (15:30–36)
  - “And I said unto them that our father also saw that **the justice of God did also divide the wicked from the righteous**; and the brightness thereof was like unto the brightness of a flaming fire, which ascendeth up unto God forever and ever, and hath no end.” (15:30, not mentioned in 1 Nephi 8!)
  - “Wherefore, if they should die in their wickedness they must be cast off also, as to the things which are spiritual, which are pertaining to righteousness; wherefore, they must be brought to stand before God, to be judged of their works; and if their works have been filthiness they must needs be filthy . . .” (15:33)
- **Final Interpretive Piece for the Tree of Life Vision**
  - “Wherefore, the wicked are rejected from the righteous, and also from that **tree of life**, whose fruit is most precious and most desirable above all other fruits; yea, and **it is the greatest of all the gifts of God**. And thus I spake unto my brethren.” (15:36)
  - “**And, if you keep my commandments and endure to the end you shall have eternal life, which gift is the greatest of all the gifts of God.**” (D&C 14:7)
    - **Definition: not just immortality, but having the kind of life that God has**
    - The ultimate fruit is **eternal life**, but in the vision, as in the Garden of Eden, man must continually eat of it . . .

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## The Journey Resumed: Structure

- Traveling for Eight Years through the Wilderness (16:1–17:4)
  - The Wicked Take the Truth to Be Hard (16:1–6, *narrative transition report*)
    - Reaction to Nephi's preaching in chapter 15
    - Daughters of Ishmael Marry (16:7–8)
    - Traversing the Wilderness with the *Liahona* (16:9–17)
    - The Broken Bow (16:18–32)
    - Death of Ishmael (16:33–39)
      - Rebellion and Repentance (16:37–39)
    - Traveling in faith, sustained by the Lord (17:1–4, *narrative summary report*)
  - *The Land Bountiful* (17:5–18:7)
  - Sailing to the Promised Land (18:8–22)
  - Arriving in the Promised Land (18:23–25)

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## The Wicked Take the Truth to Be Hard

(16:1–6, *sermon or exhortation*)

- “I knew that I had spoken hard things against the wicked, according to the truth; and *the righteous have I justified*, and testified that they should be lifted up at the last day; wherefore, *the guilty taketh the truth to be hard, for it cutteth them to the very center.*” (16:2)
  - What in Nephi's exposition in chapter 15 of his vision was directed against Laman and Lemuel?
  - Why is this the case, what causes the feelings of guilt, and how does this fact apply to us?
- “. . . *if ye were righteous and were willing to hearken to the truth*, and give heed unto it, that ye might walk uprightly before God, *then ye would not murmur because of the truth, and say: Thou speakest hard things against us.*” (16:3)
- Temporary repentance: “I, Nephi, did exhort my brethren, with all diligence, to keep the commandments of the Lord. And it came to pass that they did humble themselves before the Lord; insomuch that I had joy and great hopes . . .” (16:4–5)

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## The Liahona

- “. . . a round ball of curious workmanship; and it was of fine brass. And within the ball were two spindles; and **the one pointed the way whither we should go into the wilderness.**” (16:10)
  - The name Liahona comes from Alma 37:38–40, “I have somewhat to say concerning the thing which our fathers call a ball, or director—or our fathers called it Liahona, which is, being interpreted, a compass . . . **it did work for them according to their faith in God**; therefore, if they had faith to believe that God could cause that those spindles should point the way they should go, behold, it was done . . .”
- Crossing the River Laman . . . (16:12)
  - The *wadi* named for Laman serves as **a symbolic divide** between their old lives in Jerusalem and the journey and promised land ahead
    - Cf. **Crossing the Red Sea**
  - *Lehi’s family never returns to Jerusalem*

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## The Broken Bow Incident (16:17–32)

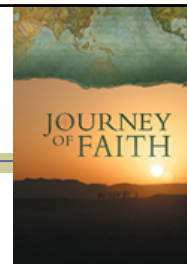
- Note Nephi’s treatment of Lehi in verses 24–25
  - **How should we treat and encourage parents, authorities, and those senior to us?**
- “. . . I, Nephi, beheld the pointers which were in the ball, that **they did work according to the faith and diligence and heed which we did give unto them.**” (16:28, editorial comment)
- How does this episode engage and affect the reader?
  - **What types of Liahonas do we have today?**
  - **What is the role of faith and diligence?**

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## Rebellion at Nahom



For this and other topics regarding Lehi in the desert, see the DVD documentary "Journey of Faith"

- See here Nahom (chapter 17)

- "And it came to pass that Ishmael died, and was buried in the place which was called Nahom." (16:34)
  - South Arabian, related to "cut stone" or "stonecutter"
  - Hebrew verb *naham*, "to be sorry or console oneself"
- Murmuring to attempted murder (16:35-38)
  - **Choices in coping: faced with grief, do we turn to the Lord for comfort or let our sorrow turn to anger?**
- Temporary repentance
  - "And it came to pass that the Lord was with us, yea, even the voice of the Lord came and did speak many words unto them, and did chasten them exceedingly; and after they were chastened by the voice of the Lord they did turn away their anger, and did repent of their sins, insomuch that the Lord did bless us again with food, that we did not perish." (16:39)

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## Traveling in Faith, Sustained by the Lord

(17:1–4, narrative summary with editorial comment)

- "And we did travel and wade through much affliction in the wilderness . . .
- **"And thus we see** that the commandments of God must be fulfilled. And if it so be that the children of men keep the commandments of God he doth nourish them, and strengthen them, and provide means whereby they can accomplish the thing which he has commanded them; wherefore, he did provide means for us while we did sojourn in the wilderness."
- "And we did sojourn for the space of many years ye, even eight years in the wilderness."

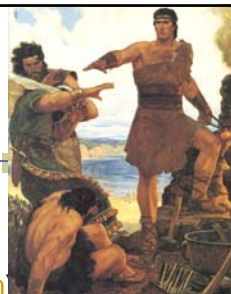
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## The Land Bountiful

(17:5–18:7, narrative with dramatic scenes)



See “Journey of Faith,” An Island of Tropical Vegetation (chapter 24) and Bountiful (chapter 25)

- Description of the Land (17:5–6, narrative transition)
- Nephi Commanded to Build a Ship (17:7–16)
- Nephi’s Brothers Refuse to Help (17:17–22)
- Nephi Admonishes His Brothers (17:23–55)
  - Nephi Recounts History of Israel (17:23–47, sermon consisting of a historical paraphrase)
    - Psalm on the Lord’s Relations with His People (17:35–40, song or poem)
  - The “Shocking” Power of the Spirit of the Lord (17:48–55)
- Building the Ship (18:1–6, returns to narrative)
- Jacob and Joseph Born (18:7, narrative summary report)
  - Note their “biblical names,” representing Lehi’s ancestors

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## Literary Excursus: Hebrew Poetry and the Book of Mormon (enrichment material)

See G. Hardy, *The Book of Mormon: A Reader’s Edition*, Appendix 5, 658-64

- Hebrew Poetry
  - Not patterns of rhythms and rhymes
  - Rather *parallelism*: same idea expressed in different words in two or more successive lines
- Synonymous
  - “Open your ears that you may hear / and your hearts that you may understand” (Mosiah 2:9)
- Antithetic
  - “quick to do iniquity / and slow to remember the Lord their God” (Mosiah 13:29)
- Synthetic (completes the idea rather than restating or contrasting it)
  - “Behold, the Lord esteemeth all flesh as one / he that is righteous is favored of God” (1 Nephi 17:35)
- Climactic (a word or phrase is repeated in each line with additional information added each time)
  - “O that ye would awake / awake from a deep sleep / yea, even from the sleep of hell” (2 Nephi 1:13)

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## Psalm on the Lord and His People (1 Nephi 17:35–40)

Behold, the Lord esteemeth all flesh in one;  
 he that is righteous is favored of God. [synthetic]

But behold, this people had rejected every word of God,  
 and they were ripe in iniquity;  
 and the fulness of the wrath of God was upon them; [climactic]

and the Lord did curse the land against them,  
 and bless it unto our fathers; [antithetic]

yea, he did curse it against them unto their destruction,  
 and he did bless it unto our fathers unto their obtaining power over it. [antithetic]

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

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

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

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

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

## Sailing to the Promised Land

(18:8–22, narrative with dramatic scenes)

- Setting forth (18:8)
  - Rebellion on the sea (18:9–21)
    - Nephi Bound (18:9–11)
    - Liahona ceases to work, storm arises (18:12–19)
    - Nephi's Lament for His Parents (1 Nephi 18:18)
      - How do those we love sometimes "suffer much grief" because of us? (cf. 18:17)
- Because of their grief and much sorrow,  
 and the iniquity of my brethren,  
 they were brought near even to be carried out of this time to meet their God;  
 yea, their grey hairs were about to be brought down to lie low in the dust;  
 yea, even they were near to be cast with sorrow into a watery grave
- Temporary repentance (18:20–21)

## The Journey Completed: Arrival in the Promised Land

- Nephi Guides Ship to the Promised Land (18:22)
- Arriving in the Promised Land (18:23–25)
  - Rather short, straightforward report
  - Not where 1 Nephi ends!

See “Journey of Faith,” The Ocean Journey (chapter 34; suggestions on routes and place of arrival remain speculative) and The Promised Land (chapter 35)

