

Lesson Highlights

- *Lehi teaches that his descendants will be blessed through the Prophet Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon.*
- *Nephi laments his sinfulness but glories in the goodness of God.*
- *The anger of Laman and Lemuel increases against Nephi, and the Lord commands the followers of Nephi to separate from the followers of Laman.*

A study of this lesson will help us strengthen our testimonies of the Prophet Joseph Smith and encourage us to find happiness through trusting in the Lord and keeping His commandments.

Next Week:

Lesson 8:

“O How Great the Goodness of Our God”,
2 Nephi 6-10

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Introduction

There are four men mentioned in **2 Nephi 3** who have the same name. Look for these four men in **2 Nephi 3:1-15**. Who did you find? You should have found:

- Joseph, last-born son of Lehi and Sariah (**2 Nephi 3:1-3**)
- Joseph of Egypt (**2 Nephi 3:4**)
- Joseph Smith Jr. (**2 Nephi 3:6-15**)
- Joseph Smith Sr. (**2 Nephi 3:15**)

Lehi taught that his descendants would be blessed through the Prophet Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon.

2 Nephi 3:4; see also **Genesis 30:22-24**; **Genesis 37:1-3**, **Genesis 37:23-28**. Lehi taught his son Joseph about a prophecy made by Joseph, the son of Jacob and Rachel who was "carried captive into Egypt".

2 Nephi 3:4-5; **Jacob 2:25**; see also **Genesis 45:7**. The covenants that Joseph of Egypt made with the Lord were important to Lehi's family because Lehi was descended from Joseph.

2 Nephi 3:6-15 The "choice seer" whom Joseph of Egypt saw in vision was the Prophet Joseph Smith.

2 Nephi 3:11 Joseph Smith "[brought] forth [the Lord's] word".

2 Nephi 3:12 The Lord told Joseph of Egypt about the Bible, which would contain words written by descendants of Judah, and the Book of Mormon, which would contain words written by descendants of Joseph.

Think about how the Bible and the Book of Mormon have "grow[n] together" as predicted in this prophecy.

2 Nephi 3:12 The Lord said blessings would come because the Bible and the Book of

Mormon would "grow together" to confound false doctrines, resolve contentions, and establish peace among the fruit of his loins.

2 Nephi 3:5 The Lord promised that "a righteous branch" of the descendants of Joseph of Egypt would be "broken off" but would be "remembered in the covenants of the Lord".

2 Nephi 3:12-13, 18-21; **2 Nephi 30:3-6** The roles of Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon in the fulfillment of these covenants are foretold in these verses.

This promise is being fulfilled today as the gospel is being proclaimed across the face of the earth and the covenants the Lord has made with his people are being remembered.

The Book of Mormon helps you remember and keep your covenants with the Lord by clarifying and explaining many covenants and providing examples of God's fulfillment of covenants with the people of the Book of Mormon.

2 Nephi 3:4-7, 11-12, 18-21 Connections between Joseph of Egypt, Lehi's son Joseph, and Joseph Smith, in addition to their name, include lineage, covenants, and the Book of Mormon.

Nephi lamented his sinfulness but gloried in the goodness of God.

2 Nephi 4:3-12 Just before Lehi died, he counseled and blessed his children and grandchildren. Counsel concerned keeping the commandments, the mercy of the Lord, the continuance of the seed of Laman and Lemuel, and the blessings to be given to the families of Ishmael, Nephi, and Sam.

2 Nephi 4:13 Soon after Lehi's death, "Laman and Lemuel and the sons of Ishmael were angry with [Nephi] because of the admonitions of the Lord". As Nephi wrote of these continuing difficulties, he recorded his feelings in a passage that is sometimes called "the Psalm of Nephi." A psalm is a poem or hymn, much like our hymns today.

2 Nephi 4:16 Nephi said, "My soul delighteth in the things of the Lord; and my heart pondereth [them] continually".

President Ezra Taft Benson said: "Just as a man does not really desire food until he is hungry, so he does not desire the salvation of Christ until he knows why he needs Christ. No one adequately and properly knows why he

needs Christ until he understands and accepts the doctrine of the Fall and its effect upon all mankind" (Ensign, May 1987, 85).

2 Nephi 4:15-16 Specific things that Nephi delighted included the scriptures and the things of the Lord.

Think about what it means to ponder the things of the Lord--to think deeply and carefully about them. The challenge, of course, is for us to make time to ponder the things of the Lord. Think about how pondering the things of the Lord can help you.

Words we might use to describe Nephi include righteous, obedient, and humble, but that is not what Nephi had to say about himself.

2 Nephi 4:17, 27; see also **1 Nephi 10:6** Nephi said that he was a "wretched man... whose... soul grieveth because of [his] iniquities".

From this, we should see that it is important to recognize our fallen nature before God.

Elder LeGrand Richards: *"The Prophet Joseph Smith brought us the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, the Pearl of Great Price, and many other writings. As far as the records show, he has given us more revealed truth than any prophet who has ever lived upon the face of the earth."* (Ensign, May 1981, p33)

Gospel Doctrine Notebook

Record your thoughts on the chapters discussed in this lesson.

- What are your thoughts on the Psalm of Nephi? Consider writing your own psalm.
- Do you delight in the scriptures? What does it mean to delight in the scriptures?
- Why do we sometimes struggle with sorrow and temptation despite our knowledge of the gospel?
- How are the righteous making a difference in today's world? Or are they?

2 Nephi 4:18-19 Nephi found hope despite feeling *"encompassed about"* by temptation and sin because of his trust in the Lord.

2 Nephi 4:20-25 These verses remind us of how the Lord had helped Nephi in the past as the Lord had:

- been Nephi's support (2 Nephi 4:20).
- led Nephi through afflictions in the wilderness (2 Nephi 4:20)
- filled him with His love (2 Nephi 4:21).
- confounded his enemies (2 Nephi 4:22).
- heard his cry (2 Nephi 4:23).
- given him knowledge by visions (2 Nephi 4:23).

Consider times when you have received similar blessings from the Lord. Then think about how remembering blessings you have received in the past can help you through difficult times.

2 Nephi 4:26-27 Nephi asked himself why he yielded to sorrow and sin in spite of the things that he had seen and the things that he knew. We sometimes struggle with sorrow and temptation despite our knowledge of the gospel so that we can be tested as we journey through mortality.

2 Nephi 4:28-30 Nephi's psalm teaches us to overcome sorrow and temptation by turning to the Lord and thinking of how blessed we are by the salvation he offers us.

2 Nephi 4:15-30 In the first part of his psalm, Nephi's words were directed toward himself.

2 Nephi 4:30-35 The conclusion of the psalm was a prayer.

2 Nephi 4:31-33 In this prayer, Nephi asked Heavenly Father to redeem him, protect him from his enemies, help him abhor and avoid sin, help him avoid hell and be welcomed into

The anger of Laman and Lemuel increased against Nephi, and the Lord commanded the followers of Nephi to separate from the followers of Laman.

2 Nephi 4:13; 2 Nephi 5:3 Laman and Lemuel were angry toward Nephi because of the admonitions of the Lord and because they thought they should be in charge because they were older than Nephi.

2 Nephi 5:2, 4 As a result of their increasing anger, Laman and Lemuel sought to take away Nephi's life.

2 Nephi 4:27-29 Compare their anger with Nephi's efforts to control his anger, as recorded in these verses.

Increasing anger can overcome the spirit and cause us to act in anything but a Christlike manner. Think about what you can do to be a peacemaker in the home, your community, and the Church.

President Howard W. Hunter taught: *"We need a more peaceful world, growing out of more peaceful families and neighborhoods and communities. To secure and cultivate such peace, 'we must love others, even our enemies as well as our friends.'... We need to extend the*

heaven, to be obedient and faithful, and to let him have divine protection in his life.

Take a moment to consider parts of Nephi's prayer that may be especially meaningful to you.

2 Nephi 4:31, 33. The Lord will *"deliver [us] out of the hands of [our] enemies"* by giving us guidance and clear direction...and when we obey, he will provide needed protection.

2 Nephi 4:31; Mosiah 5:2; Alma 13:12 To *"shake at the appearance of sin"* means that we have changed our worldly nature and now have no desire for sin.

2 Nephi 4:32 Consider what you think it means to *"walk in the path of the low valley"* and *"be strict in the plain road"*.

2 Nephi 4:33 Think about what you think it means for the Lord to *"encircle [us] around in the robe of [His] righteousness"*.

2 Nephi 4:30, 2 Nephi 4:34-35 In his prayer, Nephi promised to trust God and praise Him forever.

2 Nephi 4:34; 2 Nephi 28:31 Nephi, when he said, *"I will not put my trust in the arm of flesh"* meant that he would rely on the Lord for his strength and not be influenced by worldly concerns.

Some ways that people *"trust in the arm of flesh"* include thinking that their worldly wealth can provide all they need, or thinking that their knowledge and educational achievements can provide all they need to know.

Trusting in man or worldly things is dangerous, so consider what you can do to increase your trust in the Lord.

hand of friendship. We need to be kinder, more gentle, more forgiving, and slower to anger. We need to love one another with the pure love of Christ. May this be our course and our desire" (Ensign, May '92, 63).

2 Nephi 5:1 Because of the anger of his brothers, Nephi prayed for help.

2 Nephi 5:5 The Lord answered his prayers by telling him to leave and separate himself and his followers from his wicked brethren.

2 Nephi 5:27 When Nephi and his people had departed, they *"lived after the manner of happiness"*.

2 Nephi 5:10-17 Practices they engaged in that contributed to their happiness included keeping the commandments, preserving the records that were on the plates of brass, building a temple, and working together. The Nephites' example should help us as we strive to live *"after the manner of happiness"*.