

Lesson Highlights

- *Lehi exhorts his sons to repent, obey the Lord's commandments, and put on the armor of righteousness.*
- *Lehi testifies of the Atonement of Jesus Christ.*
- *Lehi teaches the importance of opposition and the freedom to choose good from evil.*

A study of this lesson will help us have a greater desire to "choose liberty and eternal life" through Jesus Christ, "the great Mediator of all men" (2 Nephi 2:27).

Next Week:

Lesson 7:

"I Know in Whom I Have Trusted",
2 Nephi 3-5

Green Mountain 1st Ward
Lakewood, Colorado
Doug Simpson

Introduction

One of the messages that the Book of Mormon sends to us across the years is that parents (particularly fathers) have a great obligation to bless their children and to teach their children and to bear testimony to them. The Book of Mormon contains several chapters in which Lehi, Alma, Helaman, and others are engaged in this. When we read such things in this book, we must do more than believe the doctrine: we must follow the example.

This lesson and the next will focus on what seem to be Lehi's *final admonitions* to his children.

Lehi exhorted his sons to repent, obey the Lord's commandments, and put on the armor of righteousness.

Chapter One contains counsel that Lehi gave to his sons shortly before he died. As we review the lesson material, look for specific things that Lehi counseled his sons to do and for the blessings that he promised they would receive if they obeyed his counsel.

2 Nephi 1:5 Lehi said that despite their afflictions, his people had "*obtained a land of promise*" by covenant.

2 Nephi 1:6-7, 9-10 The covenant between the Lord and Lehi's people required them to serve the Lord according to the commandments, be righteous (more than just obedient), and keep the commandments. If they did their part, the Lord would bless them with a consecrated land, liberty, a blessed land, prosperity, protection, blessings, freedom from being molested by others, a land of inheritance, and safety forever.

2 Nephi 1:10-12 Lehi said the inhabitants of the land would suffer God's just judgments, invasion from other lands, loss of their land of inheritance, scattering and oppression, and bloodshed if they rejected the Savior.

2 Nephi 1:13; see also verses 2 Nephi 1:14, 21, 23 Lehi called his sons to repentance by commanding them to "*awake...from the sleep of hell, and shake off the awful chains by which [they were] bound*". Sinfulness is like being in a deep sleep because it connotes an unconscious state in which one is unaware. Sinfulness is like being bound by chains because one cannot escape that consequence without great effort or help from another.

Lehi testified of the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

2 Nephi 2:5 Lehi said that "*by the law no flesh is justified; or, by the law men are cut off*". To be justified is to be reconciled to God, pardoned from punishment for sin, and declared righteous and guiltless.

James 2:10; 1 Nephi 10:21 The law cuts us off and prevents us from being justified because when we disobey the commandments, we become guilty and unclean, and no unclean thing can dwell with God.

2 Nephi 1:21 Lehi counseled his sons to "*arise from the dust...and be men*" and avoid captivity.

2 Nephi 1:21-27 Qualities of a righteous man recorded here include determination (to choose the right), freedom from sin, righteousness, obedience to commandments, willingness to serve God, demonstrating leadership to others while following the Savior, faithfulness during suffering, humility, seeking the glory of God and the welfare of others, speaking plainly, being filled with the power of God, and being truthful.

The world's definition of manhood is not consistent with the gospel definition. Think about how you can help young men choose righteousness over the world's definition of manhood.

2 Nephi 1:15 Lehi spoke of the blessings received through his faithfulness. Note that while some of his sons were bound by the "*awful chains*" of sin, Lehi was "*encircled about eternally in the arms of [the Savior's] love*."

Like Lehi, as we humbly come unto Christ through repentance and obedience, we will be redeemed and "*encircled about eternally in the arms of his love*."



"Ransomed", Mark Jarman, 2001

2 Nephi 2:6-8 Since we cannot be justified by the law, we can only be justified and made worthy to enter God's presence by the Atonement of Jesus Christ as we repent and are forgiven of our sins.

2 Nephi 2:7 Lehi said that the Savior would "*answer the ends of the law*". The phrase "*the ends of the law*" refers to the consequences of the Fall and to the "*punishment that is affixed*" for disobedience to God's commandments (see 2 Nephi 2:5, 2 Nephi 2:10).

Through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, we can be "encircled about eternally in the arms of [the Savior's] love" (2 Nephi 1:15). It is a great blessing to be "free to choose," "Choose liberty and eternal life" through Jesus Christ, "the great Mediator of all men" (2 Nephi 2:27).

Gospel Doctrine Notebook

- What special message would you have for your children and other family members if you knew or suspected that your time was drawing nigh? As you consider this, reflect on the topics of which Lehi speaks, testifies, and prophesies.
- What does it mean to "awake from a deep sleep" and to "shake off the chains with which ye are bound"? What does it mean in your life?
- Why is opposition necessary? Does it exist inherently or is it conjured up by God? Can you think of a time when opposition didn't or won't exist? What do you learn from all these answers, specifically applied to your life?

2 Nephi 2:7; Alma 34:13-16; D&C 19:16-19; D&C 45:3-5 The Savior answered the ends of the law by offering himself as a sacrifice for sin. **President Joseph F. Smith** said, "Jesus came and suffered, 'the just for the unjust,' he that was without sin for him that had sinned, and was subjected to the penalty of the law which the sinner had transgressed" (Gospel Doctrine, 5th ed. [1939], 204).

Lehi taught the importance of opposition and the freedom to choose good from evil.

As Lehi taught his sons about the need for opposition, he reviewed the account of Adam and Eve partaking of the forbidden fruit.

2 Nephi 2:15-25. Look for (1) conditions that existed for Adam and Eve before they partook of the forbidden fruit and (2) the opposition Adam and Eve experienced after they partook of the fruit. (See chart below.)

Note that in 2 Nephi 2, Lehi mentions some of the conditions that were brought about by the Fall. However, the doctrine of the Fall is broader in scope than is presented in this chapter. The Fall brought physical death and spiritual death into the world, thus bringing the plan of redemption into operation.

CONDITIONS BEFORE PARTAKING OF THE FRUIT	OPPOSITION EXPERIENCED AFTER PARTAKING OF THE FRUIT
They could act for themselves (2 Nephi 2:15-16), but they did not do good "for they knew no sin" (2 Nephi 2:23).	They could do good, and they could also commit sin (2 Nephi 2:23). They were commanded to repent of their sins (2 Nephi 2:21).
They did not have to till the ground in order for food to grow in the garden (2 Nephi 2:19; see also Moses 2:29).	They had to work to obtain food (2 Nephi 2:19).
They knew no misery or joy (2 Nephi 2:23).	They experienced misery and joy (2 Nephi 2:23)
They would have remained "in the same state...forever, and had no end" (2 Nephi 2:22).	They became fallen and mortal...subject to physical death (2 Nephi 2:22; see also Moses 6:48).

If Adam and Eve had not partaken of the fruit, they would not have experienced the opposition mentioned in this chart (2 Nephi 2:22-23).

2 Nephi 2:23-27; Moses 5:10-12 Blessings we can receive because the Fall of Adam and Eve brought opposition into the world include posterity, the ability to experience joy, the opportunity to do good, the ability to choose, the ability to act for ourselves, and freedom to choose eternal life.

2 Nephi 2:7; see also Romans 10:4; D&C 19:15-16; Articles of Faith 1:3. We must offer a broken heart and a contrite spirit so that we can be justified through Christ's suffering for our sins.

2 Nephi 2:6-8 "These things" that we should make known are the doctrines concerning the mission of the Savior and Redeemer. We can "make these things known" by bearing testimony to others of the gospel's truth. Making "these things" known shows gratitude to the Savior for His Atonement.

2 Nephi 2:11; see also 2 Nephi 2:15 Lehi told his children that "it must needs be, that there is an opposition in all things". Think about how important it is to



have opposition in our daily lives and how opposition can help us progress by presenting opportunities for testing and growth.

2 Nephi 2:24-28 According to these verses, our Father in Heaven wants joy, liberty, and eternal life for us.

2 Nephi 2:26-27; see also John 14:6. He provided a way for us to receive these blessings through proper use of our free agency.

2 Nephi 2:18, 2 Nephi 2:27, 2 Nephi 2:29 Satan wants misery, captivity, and spiritual death for us. Our individual actions determine whether we receive joy, liberty, and eternal life or misery, captivity, and spiritual death.

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin taught: "The Lord has given you the gift of agency (see Moses 7:32) and instructed you sufficiently to know good from evil (see 2 Nephi 2:5). You are free to choose (see 2 Nephi 2:27) and are permitted to act (see 2 Nephi 10:23; Helaman 14:30), but you are not free to choose the consequences. With absolute certainty, choices of good and right lead to happiness and peace, while choices of sin and evil eventually lead to unhappiness, sorrow, and misery" (Ensign, Nov. 1989, 75).

2 Nephi 2 contains the doctrines of the Creation (2 Nephi 2:14-15), the Fall (2 Nephi 2:4-5, 2 Nephi 2:8, 2 Nephi 2:18-25), and the Atonement (2 Nephi 2:3-4, 2 Nephi 2:6-10, 2 Nephi 2:26-27). These three doctrines are central to Heavenly Father's plan of redemption.