

an iron rod (representing God's word) leading to the tree and extending along the bank of a river. Many people pressing forward to reach the path became lost in a mist of darkness (temptations); some reached the tree and partook, only to become ashamed and fall away; others, following the rod of iron, reached the tree and enjoyed the fruit. On the other side of the river Lehi saw a large building (the PRIDE of the world) whose inhabitants ridiculed those eating the fruit. LDS scholars have pointed out that the features of Lehi's dream are quite at home in the desert in which Lehi was traveling (*CWHN* 6:253–64; cf. Griggs; Welch).

Lehi's prophecies concerned the future redemption of Israel. He spoke of the destruction of Jerusalem (587 B.C.), the taking of the Jews to Babylon, and their subsequent return to Jerusalem. He foretold the mission of JOHN THE BAPTIST and the Messiah's coming, death, and RESURRECTION. Finally, Lehi compared Israel's eventual scattering to "an olive-tree, whose branches should be broken off and . . . scattered upon all the face of the earth" (1 Ne. 10:12; cf. ALLEGORY OF ZENOS).

In the wilderness Sariah bore two sons, Jacob and Joseph (1 Ne. 18:7). Apparently the journey was so difficult that she and Lehi aged substantially. During the transoceanic voyage, their grief—caused by the rebellion of their two eldest sons—brought them close to death (18:17–18).

In the New World, Lehi gathered his family before his death to give them final teachings and blessings (2 Ne. 1–4). He taught them that he had received a great promise regarding his descendants and the land they now possessed. This promise was conditioned upon their righteousness: "Inasmuch as ye shall keep my commandments ye shall prosper in the land; but inasmuch as ye will not keep my commandments ye shall be cut off from my presence" (2 Ne. 1:20; cf. Abr. 2:6).

Lehi addressed his son Jacob about the plan of salvation (2 Ne. 2). Instead of using imagery, he explained it plainly and logically. He taught that while all know good from evil, many have fallen short. However, the Messiah has paid the debt if men and women will accept his help with a contrite spirit. He further explained that a fundamental OPPOSITION in all things exists so that people must choose. He reasoned that, as freedom of choice allowed ADAM and EVE to fall, so it permits each to choose between "liberty and eternal life, through the great Mediator of all men, or to choose

captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the devil" (2 Ne. 2:27).

Before giving his final blessings to others in the family (2 Ne. 4:3–11), Lehi spoke to Joseph, his youngest (2 Ne. 3), mentioning two other Josephs: JOSEPH who was sold into Egypt, and another, of whom the first Joseph had prophesied—Joseph SMITH. He then set forth Joseph Smith's mission of bringing forth the Book of Mormon, prophesying that a "cry from the dust" would summon Lehi's seed (2 Ne. 3:19–25), and he promised the sons and daughters of Laman and Lemuel, "in the end thy seed shall be blessed" (2 Ne. 4:9).

After Lehi's death, family dissensions forced Nephi and others who believed the revelations of God to separate from the group led by the two oldest brothers, causing a rupture in the colony. While Lehi lived, his family stayed together, a demonstration of his leadership abilities.

[See also Book of Mormon: First Book of Nephi.]

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LEVITICAL PRIESTHOOD

Levitical Priesthood is a rarely used term today, and it is sometimes applied to the AARONIC PRIESTHOOD (Heb. 7:11; D&C 107:1, 6, 10). MOSES and his brother AARON belonged to the tribe of Levi. Latter-day revelation indicates that before Moses died, the Melchizedek Priesthood and the higher law of the gospel were withdrawn from the Israelites because of their disobedience. Aaron and his sons were then given a lesser PRIESTHOOD to administer the lesser LAW OF MOSES as priests in Israel (D&C 84:18–28; Ex. 28:1). To assist Aaron and his sons, other worthy male members of the tribe of Levi were also given authority in the lesser priesthood, although they

could not be priests. The keys of that priesthood remained with Aaron and his direct posterity (*MD*, pp. 9–10; Widtsoe, pp. 12–17). Hence, the lesser priesthood was called the Aaronic Priesthood, after Aaron, but is sometimes referred to as the Levitical Priesthood because all those who possessed it in ancient times belonged to the tribe of Levi (Num. 3:12–13). In the strict sense the Levitical Priesthood is a lesser part of the Aaronic Priesthood, held among those who were Levites, but not of the family of Aaron. The Doctrine and Covenants states that “there are, in the church, two priesthoods, namely, the Melchizedek and Aaronic, including the Levitical Priesthood” (D&C 107:1). It is anticipated that in the restoration of all things, the sons of Levi will once again function in the Levitical Priesthood on the earth (Mal. 3:2–3).

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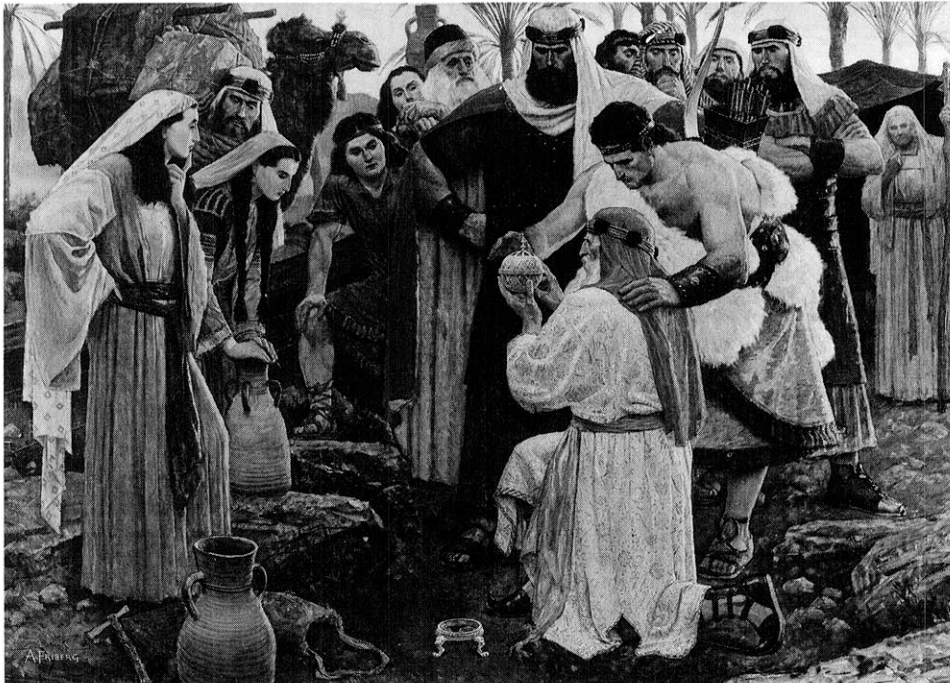
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LIAHONA

The Liahona was a compass or director “prepared . . . by the hand of the Lord” for the Book of Mormon prophet LEHI as he and his family traveled in the wilderness (2 Ne. 5:12). It was shown to the Prophet Joseph SMITH and the Three Witnesses in 1829 along with the Book of Mormon plates (D&C 17:1). The Liahona was also understood as a symbol for the words of Christ: “For just as surely as this [Liahona] did bring our fathers, by following its course, to the promised land, shall the words of Christ, if we follow their course, carry us . . . into a far better land of promise” (Alma 37:45).

Described as a ball made of fine brass and “of curious workmanship,” it had two spindles, one pointing the direction Lehi’s family should travel (1 Ne. 16:10). The term “Liahona” appears only once in the Book of Mormon (Alma 37:38). It was usually referred to as “the ball” (1 Ne. 16:16, 26–27; etc.), “compass” (1 Ne. 18:12; Alma 37:43–44; etc.), or “director” (Mosiah 1:16; cf. D&C 17:1).

Lehi found the Liahona, provided by the Lord (Alma 37:38), outside of his tent door while camp-



Lehi and His People Discover the Liahona, by Arnold Friberg (1951; oil on canvas, 43" × 61"), in the South Visitors Center, Temple Square, Salt Lake City. While traveling in the wilderness south of Jerusalem, the Book of Mormon prophet Lehi and his family found the Liahona, a compass or director prepared by the Lord.