

357: Jan 26; Feb 2: Adversity and Opportunity (Come, Follow Me, Book of Mormon Weeks 4-5)

January 20-26: 1 Ne 11-15

*Jan 27-Feb 2: 1 Ne 16-22

Sunday School

- Reviewing Nephi's vision
 - Church of God and Church of the Devil. What is Church? What is Religion? (some of my very favorite topics, reason for "challenge and be challenged by the scriptures)
- Lessons from the wilderness
 - Preparation, faith, work
 - The blessings of hunger
 - Everything is an opportunity
 - Motivation and change "insomuch"
 - Perspectives on Laman, Lemuel, Nephi (was there a way to get to Laman and Lemuel?) Family Systems theory (we are system symptoms as much as individual agents, if not more so)
- Welcome to Isaiah
- Conclusion: the wilderness of life (how we can apply these scriptures to our own lives)

Nephi's vision of everything

11: Interpretation/Savior/Love of God

12: Destruction of Nephites/Jesus' ministry (Redeemed realism. Triage and ministry. Start with what is)

13: Great & Abominable Church. (I based my PhD program on this chapter. Totally serious). Stephen Robinson suggests this historical institution was Hellenitized Christianity. The description seems influenced by Joseph's views of the Catholic Church.

Who is the man among the Gentiles? Not necessarily Columbus.

<https://bycommonconsent.com/2016/10/11/a-man-among-the-gentiles-questioning-our-assumptions/>

14: Church of the Lamb and Church of the Devil

Which Church is the Church of the Lamb? All of them

Which Church is the Church of the Devil? All of them?

I think these are tendencies that all religions and all humans fall into (what elements of a religion are divine and what elements are human? What elements elevate, and what elements denigrate? These are essential questions)

15: I've always appreciated the matter-of-factness of 15:1 (Returned from a vision of literally everything back to my father's tent)

(Good lesson on where we are vs. where others are, think about Nephi's state of mind vs. his brothers', dig into their concerns and focus) Once again, Nephi escalates rather than being diplomatic

I REALLY connected to chapter 16 on this read through.

16: more escalation. Trials in the desert (really talk about what this stage of life is, grit and grind. Epiphanies and breakthroughs and resets can come at any moment... this is the practice and process)

16:8 (I like to read this as a commentary on Nephi's wife :))

Liahona: Preparation and faith

16:23: This is one of the most important things I'll ever say in the podcast. Much has been made of this moment, and rightly so. "Redirection not rejection" In life don't shut people down or turn away opportunities. Instead, give people and life a chance, an opportunity to do things better. Describe the your goals and invite yourself to meet you there. Describe the relationship you want and see if others will join you. Put weight where it belongs, and let each person do their own work (Instead of quitting, could say "I would be glad to stay if x, y, and z"). Yes there are times to decisively disengage, but I think redirection works better in most cases.

Why did they fear and tremble? Seeing potential consequences? Life is the best teacher. Let the consequences fall where they should (rather than enabling) and then spend every cent.

Did Ishmael die because of this period of hunger?

Everything is an opportunity. Hunger is the best side dish. Practice appreciating the difficult. Everything is an opportunity. (My work among the dying and imprisoned has greatly increased my ability and will to take this approach. As quickly as possible shift from Why did this happen? Why did this have to happen? To What do I do with this? How can I make the most of this? I'm not being trite, because there is nothing else besides what is. Took me over 40 years to embrace this.

Health and opportunity are such gifts. Even hungry, even with a broken bow, Nephi could see that he still had strength to create a solution and work.

He deceives us (38): Perception is hallucination, memory fiction. The only way around this is to be genuinely open and self-correcting. If we don't believe something is possible or we don't want to see it, we will literally hallucinate it away or just forget.

Insomuch (39) We are as we are incentivized and empowered to be. Note that Laman and Lemuel are motivated *just enough* to save their lives, and always motivated externally rather than internally.

17:

"Began to bear their journeyings without murmurings" (17:2). I so relate. Naming is healthy.

Complaining is a waste of time. Spend energy only where it is beneficial (Serenity Prayer).

Repetition of Bountiful/much food suggests they were close to dying when they got there.

17:9: Where shall I go to find ore? Note the pattern: Do as much as you can, then ask for more guidance (another bit of evidence that Nephi and Lehi were metal workers)

God is our light in the wilderness 17:12-14: When we realize we are connected and dependent, fosters gratitude and humility.

17:18 "were desirous that they might not labor" **Pain and effort avoidance.** I believe the root of everything wrong in the world and life is here. We don't want to hurt. We don't want to work. We usually work hard enough to avoid hurt. Scott Peck: Evil is the refusal to see our own flaws (hurt) so we project them onto others and seek to destroy them (the evidence of our flaws).

17:21 What do we value? “We might have enjoyed our possessions/we might have been happy” (suffering of wives and children mentioned first)

17:40 “He loves those who will have him to be their God” (choosing and following God puts us within reach of God’s love; we are aligned so we can feel it)

More escalation and preaching. **Is there an approach that would have worked for Laman and Lemuel?** (Respect, Valerie says. I agree. Still resonating with the idea that Nephi was originally close to Laman and Lemuel, which makes all this more poignant) God and Nephi have to basically bully Laman and Lemuel into obedience/work.

18:

18:1 Guidance “from time to time.” Another great pattern. Go to work. Keep working. Get more information when needed.

Pattern: Balance of work, preparation, revelation.

Jacob and Joseph (Don Bradley and intertextuality)

18:10: Did Nephi bring this on himself? Self-fulfilling prophecy? It seems it was more Nephi’s concerns about the dancing and partying that escalated things. It has struck me before that God worked with Nephi’s character and patterns, but that doesn’t mean there wasn’t a better way.

“We did call it the promised land” (more intertextuality/typology)

19:

19:1 This is an account of making the large plates (Don Bradley, lost 116 pages)

“Write nothing but what I consider sacred”

Our *actions* demonstrate what we consider sacred. Attention and investment is everything.

19:10 One of our most direct references to lost scripture (Brass Plates it would seem)

19:20 for had not the Lord been merciful, to show unto me concerning them, even as he had prophets of old, I should have perished also. (perspective, gratitude, pondering what could have been increases gratitude for what is)

20: Beginning of Isaiah in the Book of Mormon! (Check in with what is... textual evidence is overwhelming that Joseph consulted the KJV while working through these chapters, and followed a similar process that he did with the Bible revision) “Compare Isaiah...” well I did in college. Word by word. Just yesterday one of my patients was complaining about how difficult the Isaiah chapters are to understand. A good place to start is to ask why these particular passages are in the Book of Mormon.

Themes of this chapter: God’s foreknowledge. Affliction has a purpose. God’s mercy. Everything is an opportunity to be refined and draw closer to God. We have a tendency to be dumb and reluctant. I’m so touched by God’s longing “If only you would be faithful... then I could bless you and you could feel my love” (Moses 7)

21: A pattern I’ve noticed with the Isaiah chapters is that there are pre-Millennium and post-Millennium messages, with emphasis on the Messiah tying them together (which is what the idea of the Messiah was... a servant of God who would bring the Kingdom and Dominion of God to earth).

21:3 note that this servant symbolizes Israel. God is speaking of the role Israel will play in the world. Scholars believe that the “servant songs” of Isaiah refer to Israel as God’s chosen servant/Messiah figure.

God cannot forget us... what powerful imagery! "I have graven thee on the palms of my hands"
Love the God/birth/mother imagery we see several times in the scriptures.

We can apply this to ourselves. We can become redeemers of/in the world, in our sphere and way and level.

22: Pretty sophisticated question. Laman and Lemuel are clearly scripturally literate.

Lost tribes: Northern kingdom led away into Assyria in 722

Nephi's interpretation of Isaiah is informed by his vision we read at the beginning of this section.
How does God work to redeem us all? Is a key question of the scriptures.