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## 1 Nephi Chapter 3

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## Chapter 3

{Original 1830 Chapter I – continued}

*Lehi and Nephi Respond to the Covenant  
(The Lord's Servants Are Obedient)  
They Seek First to Obtain the Lord's Word*

### 1 And **it came to pass**

that I **Nephi** \_\_\_\_\_ *returned*  
from **speaking** with **the Lord** [**My Father**]  
to \_\_\_\_\_ the **tent of** \_\_\_\_\_ **my father**

01

### 2 And **it came to pass**

that he [my father] **spake** unto me  
**saying**

#### **Behold**

I [your father] have **dreamed** a **dream in the which**  
**the Lord** hath **commanded** me \_\_\_\_\_ [your father]

{AG} 02

**that** thou [**Nephi**]  
**and** thy brethren shall *return to Jerusalem*

### 3 For **behold**

**Laban** hath \_\_\_\_\_ the **record** **of** the **Jews**  
**and also** [**Laban** hath] \_\_\_\_\_ a **genealogy of my/thy** fore **fathers** [O, P, 1981 / 1837, 1920]  
**and they are** \_\_\_\_\_ **engraven upon** **plates of brass**

*[Note: This assignment given to Nephi was essentially impossible. The plates were heavily guarded and valuable. The house of Laban was probably attached to or very near the King's palace. The long journey was fraught with danger from wild animals and robbers. But Lehi repeats the commandment and the covenant promise of the Lord that goes with the assignment. (See Verneil Simmons, Peoples, Places and Prophecies, p. 67.)]*

### 4 **Wherefore**

**the Lord** hath **commanded** me \_\_\_\_\_ [your father]

**that** thou [**Nephi**]  
**and** thy brothers should *return to Jerusalem*  
[and] *go* unto the house of **Laban**  
**and seek** \_\_\_\_\_ the **records**  
**and bring** them [the records]  
*\*down hither into the wilderness*

03

[Heb. 01 – Two nouns connected by “of” = Adjective]

[Heb. 03 – Compound prepositions “down” “into”]

[Heb. 02 – A verb and a noun with the same root “dream”]

[1 Nephi 3]

5 **And now behold** thy brothers **murmur** [about *returning to Jerusalem*]  
**saying** it *[returning to Jerusalem]*  
is a hard **thing\*** aa

**which** I [your **father**] have \_\_\_\_\_ **required** of them  
**but behold** I [your **father**] have NOT **required** it  
of them  
**but** it [this **thing**] is a **commandment** of **the Lord\*** bb

6 **Therefore**  
my son **[Nephi]\*** *go \_\_\_\_\_ [up to Jerusalem]* cc  
**[and do the things**  
which **the Lord** hath **commanded]** [see verse 7]

**and because** thou **[Nephi]** shalt be **favored of the Lord** 04  
thou **[Nephi]** hast NOT **murmured**  
[against **the Lord**]

[Note: Nephi, having recently been visited by the Lord and having covenanted with the Lord, makes the following covenant statement: ]

7 **And it came to pass**  
**that** I **[Nephi]** **said** unto my **father**  
I **[Nephi]** will *go \_\_\_\_\_ [up to Jerusalem]*  
**and do the things**  
which **the Lord** hath **commanded**  
**for** I **[Nephi]** **KNOW**  
**that the Lord** giveth NO **commandments** unto **the children of men**  
**save He [the Lord]** shall **PREPARE A WAY** for them  
**that \_\_\_\_\_** they **[the children of men]**  
may **accomplish** the **thing**  
which **He [the Lord]** **commandeth \_\_\_\_\_** them

8 **And it came to pass**  
**that when** [he] **my father** had **heard** these [covenant] **words**  
he **[my father]** was **exceedingly glad** ["ly" added]  
**for** he **[my father]** **KNEW**  
**that** I **[Nephi]** had been **blessed of the Lord**

[Par. aa – Random repetition of keyword “thing(s)”]  
[Par. bb – Random repetition of “the Lord”]

[Par. cc – Circular repetition of “Nephi”]  
[Heb. 04 -- Passive participle with “of” instead of “by”]

~~~ Nephi Goes to Jerusalem After the Plates of Laban

9 And I Nephi and my brethren took our journey in the wilderness with our tents to go up to the land of Jerusalem \*\*

10 And it came to pass that when we had gone / come up to the land of Jerusalem [<sup>^</sup>O, 1981 / <sup>Φ</sup>, 1920]

I [Nephi] and my brethren \_\_\_\_\_ did consult one with another [*using the reasoning of men*] \*\*

11 And we cast lots who of us should go in unto the house of Laban [O= which]

And it came to pass that the lot fell upon Laman\* [*the oldest, who represented the order of the world*] dd  
and [he] Laman went in unto \_\_\_\_\_ the house of Laban

And he [Laman] talked with him \_\_\_\_\_ [Laban]  
as he [Laman] sat in his \_\_\_\_\_ house

12 And he [Laman] desired of \_\_\_\_\_ Laban  
the records  
which [records] were engraved upon the plates of brass  
which [records] contained the genealogy of my father

[Note: The above verses 3-12 have been arranged in *chiastic parallelism* by Donald Parry, *The Book of Mormon Text Reformatted according to Parallelistic Patterns*:1992:4-5. An outline of parallel elements is as follows:

|    |     |         |                  |                               |                                 |                 |                    |                       |                        |             |           |            |                  |                                                                                |
|----|-----|---------|------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|-------------|-----------|------------|------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 3  | [A] | (Laban) | (record)         | (genealogy of my forefathers) | (engraved upon plates of brass) | ee              |                    |                       |                        |             |           |            |                  |                                                                                |
| 4  |     | [B]     | (house of Laban) |                               |                                 |                 |                    |                       |                        |             |           |            |                  |                                                                                |
| 5  |     | [C]     | (brothers)       |                               |                                 |                 |                    |                       |                        |             |           |            |                  |                                                                                |
| 7  |     |         | [D]              | (I Nephi)                     |                                 |                 |                    |                       |                        |             |           |            |                  |                                                                                |
|    |     |         |                  | [E]                           | (my father)                     |                 |                    |                       |                        |             |           |            |                  |                                                                                |
|    |     |         |                  |                               | [F]                             | (do the things) |                    |                       |                        |             |           |            |                  |                                                                                |
|    |     |         |                  |                               |                                 | [G]             | (Lord) (commanded) |                       |                        |             |           |            |                  |                                                                                |
|    |     |         |                  |                               |                                 |                 | [G]                | (Lord) (commandments) |                        |             |           |            |                  |                                                                                |
|    |     |         |                  |                               |                                 |                 |                    | [F]                   | (accomplish the thing) |             |           |            |                  |                                                                                |
|    |     |         |                  |                               |                                 |                 |                    |                       | [E]                    | (my father) |           |            |                  |                                                                                |
| 8  |     |         |                  |                               |                                 |                 |                    |                       |                        | [D]         | (I Nephi) |            |                  |                                                                                |
| 9  |     |         |                  |                               |                                 |                 |                    |                       |                        |             | [C]       | (brethren) |                  |                                                                                |
| 11 |     |         |                  |                               |                                 |                 |                    |                       |                        |             |           | [B]        | (house of Laban) |                                                                                |
| 12 |     |         |                  |                               |                                 |                 |                    |                       |                        |             |           |            | [A]              | (Laban) (records) (engraved upon the plates of brass) (genealogy of my father) |

[Heb. \*\* -- Reversal of order in a compound subject]

[Par. dd – Circular repetition “Laman”]

[Heb. \*\* – Reversal of order in a compound subject]

[Par. ee – Chiasitic or Extended inverted parallelism]

[1 Nephi 3]

13 And behold

**it came to pass**

that [he] **Laban** was **angry**  
and [he] **Laban** thrust \_\_\_him **Laman** out from **his** presence  
And he **Laban** would NOT  
that he **Laman** should have the **records**

**Wherefore**

he **Laban** said unto him **Laman**

Behold thou **Laman** art a robber [Laban bears false witness]  
and I **Laban** will **slay** thee **Laman** [Laban attempts to murder]

14

But [he] **Laman** fled out of **his** presence  
And [he] **Laman** told [us]  
the **things**

which [he] **Laban** had **done** \_\_\_\_\_ unto us

and we **began to be** exceedingly sorrowful [“ly” added] 05  
and my **brethren** were about **to return**  
unto my **father**  
**in the wilderness**

*Nephi Holds to the Lord's Covenant Promises*

15 But behold

I **Nephi** said unto them [my **brethren**]

that **\*As the Lord** liveth [covenant language] 06  
and as we live  
we will NOT **go down** \_\_\_\_\_  
unto our **father**  
**in the wilderness**

until we have **accomplished** the **thing**  
which **the Lord** hath **commanded** us [see 1 Ne 3:7]

16 **Wherefore**

let us be **faithful** in **keeping** [or doing]  
the **commandments of the Lord**

**[A] Therefore**

let us **go down to the land** [see v. 22]

**[B]**

of our **father's inheritance**

[Heb. 05 – The use of the words “began to be”]

[Heb. 06 – A covenant oath]

[C]for **behold** he [our **father**] **left** **gold\***  
**and** **silver\***  
**and** **ALL manner of riches\*** [see 1 Ne. 2:4, 11]

**And** **ALL this\*** ff  
 he [our **father**] hath **done** because of  
 [“s” added on P ]  
**the commandment**s of the **Lord**  
 [“of the Lord” added on Ooc ]

17 **For** he [my **father**] <sup>^</sup>knowing / knew [^O / 1840]  
**that** **Jerusalem** MUST be **destroyed**  
 because of **the wickedness of the people** 07

18 **For behold** they [the **people** of **Jerusalem**]  
 have **rejected** the **words** of the **prophets**  
 [covenant terms]

**Wherefore**

**if** [he] **my father**  
 should  **dwell in \_\_\_\_\_ the land [of Jerusalem]** [duality]

**after\*** he [my **father**] hath been **commanded** [of **the Lord**] [\*O= that]  
 to  **flee out of the land [of Jerusalem]**

**behold** [**then**] he [my **father**] 08  
 would also **perish** [covenant stipulations]

**Wherefore**

it MUST needs be

**that** he [my **father**]  
 [should]  **flee out of the land [of Jerusalem]**

*God Has Preserved a Covenant Record from the Beginning  
 God Desires Lehi's Family to Have That Covenant Knowledge*

19 **And behold**

[A] it is **wisdom** in **God** 88  
 [B] that we should **obtain these records**  
 [C] that we **may preserve** unto **our children** [O= might]  
 [D] the [**covenant**] **language** of our **fathers**

[Par. ff – Detailing “all this” that was “done”]  
 [Heb. 07 – Two nouns connected by “of” = Adjective]

[Heb. 08 – If / then with “then” assumed]  
 [Par. gg – Extended alternating]

[1 Nephi 3]

20 And also

[A] [it is **wisdom in God**]

[B] [that we should **obtain these records**]

[C] that we **may preserve** unto them [our children]

[O= might]

[D] the [covenant] **words** which have been **spoken**  
by the mouth of ALL the **holy prophets**

09

[D'] which [covenant] **words** have been **delivered**  
unto them [the **holy prophets**]

by the **Spirit**  
and [by the] **power of God**

since the world began  
even down unto this present time

\* \* \*

21 And it came to pass

that **after** this [covenant] manner of **language** did

[see 1 Ne. 5:3]

I [Nephi] **persuade** my brethren

that they [my brethren] might **be faithful** in **keeping** [or doing]  
the **commandments of God**

*~~~Nephi Goes Down to the Land of Their Inheritance & Back Up to Jerusalem  
Nephi Is Willing to Sacrifice All He Possesses (Gold, Silver, etc.)  
to Be Faithful to His Covenant with the Lord*

22 And it came to pass

[A] that **we** *went down* to the land

\*\*

[B] *of* our inheritance

[C] and **we** did **gather** together **our gold**  
and **our silver**  
and **our precious things**

23

[\*O= that]

[C] And **after** **we** had **gathered** these **things** together

[B] [*of* our inheritance]

[A] **we** *went up again*  
[to Jerusalem]  
unto the house of **Laban**

24 And it came to pass

that **we** *went in* unto **Laban**\*

hh

and [**we**] desired him [**Laban**]  
that he [**Laban**] would give unto us

[Heb. 09 – Separated prepositions]

[Par. \*\* -- Extended alternating parallelism from v. 16 + chiasmic parallelism]

[Par. hh – Circular repetition “Laban”]

the **records**  
which **[records]**  
were **engraven** upon the plates of brass  
for which **[records]**

**we** would give unto him **[Laban]**

[C]

**our gold**  
**and our silver**  
**and ALL our precious things**

25 **And it came to pass**

that **when** [he] **Laban** saw \_\_\_\_\_ **our property** [1981] ii  
**and** [he] **Laban** saw that]\_\_it **[our property]** was exceeding**ly** GREAT  
he **[Laban]** did lust after it **[our property]** [Laban covets–Ex. 20:17]

[And he **Laban** did lust after it **[our property]**  
**insomuch that** he **[Laban]** **[did?]** thrust us out

**And** [he] **Laban** sent his servants to **slay** us [murder – Exodus 20:13]  
**[insomuch] that** he **[Laban]** might **obtain our property** [stealing – Ex. 20:15]

*~~~Nephi & His Brethren Flee into the Wilderness to a Cavity of a Rock*

26 **And it came to pass**

that **we** did **flee**  
before the servants of **Laban**  
**and we** were obliged to leave behind \_\_\_\_\_ **our property**  
**And** it **[our property]**  
fell into the **hands\*** of **Laban**

10

27 **And it came to pass**

that **we** \_\_\_\_\_ **fled** \_\_\_\_\_ *into the wilderness*  
**and** the servants of **Laban** did NOT overtake us  
**and we** \_\_\_\_\_ hid ourselves **In the cavity of a rock** [they were in darkness]

[Note: According to Donald Parry (2007:6-7) verses 16 thru 22 can be seen as a **chiastic parallelism**. The following is an outline of the parallel phrases:

- 16 [A] (down to the land)
- [B] (the commandments of God)
- 18 [C] (words of the prophets)
- 19 [D] (that we may preserve)
- 20 [D] (that we may preserve)
- [C] (mouth of all the holy prophets)
- 21 [B] (the commandments of God)
- 22 [A] (down to the land)

[Par. ii – Circular repetition “our property”] [Heb. 10 – Metaphor “hands” = power]



[1 Nephi 3]

28 **And it came to pass**

that **Laman** was **angry** with me [**Nephi**]  
and also [**Laman** was **angry**] with my **father**

and also was **Lemuel** [**angry** with me **Nephi**  
and with my **father**]  
for he **Lemuel** **hearkened** unto the **words** of **Laman**

**Wherefore**

**Laman**  
and **Lemuel** did **speak** MANY **hard words** [hard = sharp, forceful, violent]  
unto us their younger brothers  
and **they** did **smite** us even with a **rod**

*Nephi Has Been Chosen (by Covenant) to Be a Ruler  
As with Moses, the Rod Is Nephi's Symbol of Rulership  
Rebellious Laman & Lemuel Are Rebuked  
for Not Understanding the Covenant Way*

29 **And it came to pass**

as **they** **smote** us with a **rod** [did smite?]  
**behold** an **angel of the Lord** [symbolically a personage of light]

and **he** [the **angel of the Lord**]  
**came** and **stood** before **them**  
**spake** unto **them**  
**saying**

Why do **ye** smite your younger brother [**Nephi**] with a **rod**? 11  
[A "rod" or scepter is a symbol of rulership – see Isaiah 14:5]

**Know** **ye** NOT  
**that** **the Lord** hath **chosen** him [**Nephi**] to be a **ruler** over you  
and **this** [**the Lord** hath **chosen** him]  
because of your **iniquities**? jj

**Behold** **ye** shall **go** **up** to **Jerusalem** again [O= thou shalt]  
and [at **Jerusalem**]  
**the Lord** will **deliver** **Laban** into your **hands**

30 **And after** [that] [\*O= that] \*\*  
[he] the **angel**[of the Lord] had **spake/spoken** unto us [O, P/ 1830] {AG}  
he [the **angel of the Lord**] **departed**

[Heb. 11 – Irony A "rod" is a symbol of rulership]  
[Par. jj – Questions are used to make a point]

[Heb. \*\* -- Use of "after that"]

Laman and Lemuel Deny Further Light and Knowledge from the Lord

31 And **after** [that] [he] the **angel**[of the Lord] had **departed** [after the "light" had departed] [deleted]

**Laman**  
and **Lemuel** again began to **murmur**  
**saying**

How is it possible

**Behold** that **the Lord** will **deliver Laban** into our **hands ?**  
\_\_\_\_\_ he [Laban] is **a mighty man** 12

**and** he [Laban] can command **fifty**  
**yea even** he [Laban] can slay **fifty** kk

**Then** why \_\_\_\_\_ [can] not  
[Laban slay]\_\_\_\_\_us ? LL

[Heb. 12 – Idiom “mighty” refers to having multiple powers—physical, military, political, mental, etc.]

[Par. kk – Using numbers ]

[Par. LL – Questions are used to make a point]

[Note: Some might ask, “How can anyone begin to murmur minutes after being visited by an angel? To me, the focus here is on rejection of light, rather than rejection of an angel. There are apparently times when angels do not reveal their true identity. “In Genesis 18, Abraham welcomed three angelic guests who appeared at first to be nothing more than some travellers. In the following chapter, two angels went to Sodom where they were simply assumed to be a pair of human visitors.” (christiananswers.net)]

[Note: Hugh Nibley notes that “fifty” would have been the number of a permanent military “garrison” in Jerusalem (see 1 Ne 4:1). (*Lehi in the Desert*, FARMS, pp. 97-98). Interestingly, according to biblestudy.org, the number fifty can be found 154 times in the Bible. “Its meaning is directly related to the coming of God’s Holy Spirit.” This could mean that in a subtle manner, Nephi is implying here that not only Laban, but Laman and Lemuel had rejected the spirit of the Lord, which attempted to confirm to them the correctness of Nephi’s motives of covenant-obedience in attempting to retrieve the plates.]

[Note: In 1987, Noel B. Reynolds proposed a **conceptual chiastic structure** for chapters 3—5 of 1 Nephi (see the following page). The full chiastic structure contains **17 parallel elements**, all leading to the Central Message, which deals with the question: “Who is mightier, God or Laban?” Reynolds notes that the element “K” (for 1 Nephi 4:12-19) is advanced one position in the structure because of chronology, but that the structural parallel is easy to recognize. (See Noel B. Reynolds, “The Political Dimension in Nephi’s Small Plates,” FARMS, 1987, p. 14.)

- A. Lehi tells Nephi of the commandment he has received in a dream (3:2)
- B. Lehi describes the contents of the plates of brass, mentioning genealogy. (3:3)
- C. Lehi was commanded that his sons should seek this record. (3:4)
- D. Laman and Lemuel murmur that it is a hard thing. (3:5)
- E. Nephi testifies that God will “prepare a way.” (3:7)
- F. Lehi is glad, because he knows Nephi has been “blessed of the Lord.” (3:8)
- G. The brothers return to Jerusalem and consult with each other. (3:9-10)
- H. Laban attempts to slay Laman. (3:11-13)
- I. The four are sorrowful: Laman and Lemuel want to return to the wilderness. (3:14)
- J. Nephi’s oath: “As the Lord liveth and as we live” to keep the commandments of the lord. (3:15-18)
- K. Nephi’s reasons for getting the plates. (3:19-21)
- L. The brothers collect Lehi’s gold, silver, and precious things. (3:22-23)
- M. The brothers attempt to buy the plates, but Laban steals their property and attempts to slay them. (3:24-26)
- N. They hide in “the cavity of a rock.” (3:27)
- O. Lemuel “hearkens” to Laman; they are angry, speak harsh words, and “smite” Nephi and Sam with a rod. (3:28)
- P. An angel announces that Nephi has been chosen to be their ruler and promises that the Lord will deliver Laban into their hands. (3:29)
- Q. Laman and Lemuel murmur again, for who can deliver them from Laban and his fifty? (3:31)
- Q’ Nephi assures his brothers that God is mightier than Laban and his fifty (4:1)
- P’ Nephi speaks of Moses and reminds them of the angel’s promise to deliver Laban into their hands. (4:2-3)
- O’ Laman and Lemuel are still angry, they continue to murmur, and they do follow Nephi. (4:4)
- N’ Nephi hides his brothers outside the city walls. (4:5)
- M’ Nephi is led by the Spirit to find the plates, and the Spirit reminds him of Laban’s theft and attempt to kill them; Nephi slays Laban. (4:6-12)
- L’ Nephi gets the metal plates with Zoram’s assistance. (4:20-30)
- K’ The Spirit’s reasons for Nephi to kill Laban. (4:12-19)
- J’ Nephi’s oath again: “As the Lord liveth and as I live” used to urge Zoram to join them in following Lehi. (4:31-34)
- I’ Sariah is sorrowful and wishes to be back in Jerusalem. (5:2-3)
- H’ Nephi spares Zoram’s life. (4:35-38)
- G’ Lehi comforts Sariah as their sons travel up to Jerusalem. (5:4-6)
- F’ Sariah is gladdened by her sons’ return as the Lord has delivered them. (5:7)
- E’ Sariah testifies that God has accomplished this, using Nephi’s very words. (5:8)
- D’ Lehi and Sariah rejoice and offer sacrifices and thanks to God. (5:9)
- C’ Lehi searches the record. (5:10)
- B’ Lehi summarizes the prophecies and genealogies in the plates of brass. (5:11-19)
- A’ Lehi and Nephi had kept all the Lord’s commandments to them. (5:20-21)