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1 Nephi Chapter 1

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Chapter 1

{Original 1830 Chapter I—comprising modern Chapters 1-5}

[Note: At least 30 years after leaving Jerusalem, and from the location of the land of Nephi in the Americas, Nephi begins this record (the "Small Plates") with an abridgment of the record of his father Lehi (see 2 Nephi 5:27-31).]

*Nephi Sets Forth the Basis For Understanding His Record
Nephi Knew the "Mysteries" (the Covenant Way) of God
Nephi Knew that the Ancient Prophets Used Language
Culture & History to Convey Covenant Understanding*

[Preface]

1 I **Nephi** having been born _____ of **goodly parents** aa
[covenant language]

therefore I **Nephi** was **taught** somewhat in **ALL** the **learning** of **my father** 01

and I **Nephi** having seen **MANY** afflictions in the course of **my days**
nevertheless having been **HIGHLY** favored of **the Lord** in **ALL** **my days** bb

[A] **yea** I **Nephi** having had a **GREAT** _____ (**KNOWLEDGE**) of the **goodness**
and [of] the **mysteries of God**

[B] **therefore** I **Nephi** **make** a **(record)** of my proceedings in **my days** cc

2 [C] **Yea** I **Nephi** **make** a **(record)** in the _____ (**language**) of **my father**

[D] which **(record)** consists of the (**learning** of the **Jews**) [?]
[C] **and** the (**language**) of the **Egyptians**

3 [B] **And** I **Nephi** _____ **KNOW**

that the **(record)** which
I **Nephi** **make** **is** **TRUE** [P= to be]

and I **Nephi** **make** it [the **(record)**] with mine own **hand** [duality - hand = a covenant sign for **truth**]
[A] **and** I **Nephi** **make** it [the **(record)**] according to my (**KNOWLEDGE**)

* * *

[Note: It is intriguing that a personal testimony that the content of the Book of Mormon is "true" is given by each of the three major abridgers of the book: (1) by Nephi – 1 Nephi 1:3, 14:30, 22:30; (2) by Mormon – Alma 3:12, 3 Ne. 8:1; and (3) by Moroni – Ether 5:1-3, Moroni 10:4,29. In Ether 5:4 we find: "And in the mouth of three witnesses shall these things be established . . . and all this shall stand as a testimony against the world at the last day."]

[Par. aa – Like beginnings "I Nephi"]

[Par. cc – Circular repetition "record"]

[Heb. 01 -- Hyperbole "ALL"]

[Par. bb – Contrasting lines]

[1 Nephi 1]

[Note: According to Raymond Treat (1988: 1) some of the above can also be arranged in *chiastic or extended inverse parallelism*. A simple outline with the pertinent parallel elements is as follows:

- 1 [A] (knowledge) [B] (record)
- 2 [C] (language) [D] (learning of the Jews)
- 3 [C] (language) [B] (record) [A] (knowledge)

*~~~Lehi Has Dwelt in Jerusalem All His Days
The Lord's People Have Forsaken Their Covenants with Him
The Lord Warns Lehi & Other Prophets of Destruction*

4 For **it came to pass** 02
 in the commencement of the first year of the reign
 of Zedekiah king of Judah

my father Lehi having dwelt _____ at Jerusalem
 in ALL his days

and in that same year
 there came MANY prophets* 03
 prophesying unto the people [see Alma 37:30; Ether 7:23; 9:28; 11:1,12,20]

that they [the people] MUST repent
 or the GREAT city Jerusalem
 MUST be destroyed

5 Wherefore
 it came to pass
 that my father Lehi— 04
 as he [my father Lehi] went forth

[he my father Lehi] prayed unto the Lord
 yea [he my father Lehi] [prayed] even _____ with _____ ALL his heart
 in behalf of [ALL] his people

Lehi Sees a Pillar of Fire – Sees & Hears Much

6 And **it came to pass**
 as he [my father Lehi] prayed unto the Lord [upon a sacred mountain? Sinai? Exod. 19:18]
 there came _____ a Pillar of Fire 04
 and [the Pillar of Fire] dwelt upon a rock
 before him

[Heb. 02 -- Initiator "And it came to pass"]

[Par. dd -- Like beginnings "my father Lehi"]

[Heb. 03 – Noun & verb with the same root "proph—"]

[Heb. 04 – Metaphor "pillar of fire"]

and he [my father **Lehi**] **saw**
and **heard** MUCH

and because of the **things** which
he [my father **Lehi**] **saw**
and **heard**

he [my father **Lehi**] did **quake**
and [he my father **Lehi** did] **tremble exceedingly**

05

7 And **it came to pass**

that he [my father **Lehi**] **returned** _____to his **own house at Jerusalem**
and he [my father **Lehi**] cast himself upon his [own] bed

and **being overcome** with the **Spirit**
and **being overcome** by] the **things** which

he [my father **Lehi**] had _____ **seen**

*Lehi Has Another Vision – God on His Throne
The Lord & the Twelve Come to Earth*

8

and **being thus overcome** with the **Spirit**
he [my father **Lehi**] was **carried away** [in the **Spirit**]
in a **dream***

[P= vision]

even that he [my father **Lehi**] _____ **saw** the **heavens** open
and he [my father **Lehi**] thought he **saw** _____ **God** sitting
[in the **heavens**]
upon His [**God's**] throne
surrounded with numberless concourses of **angels—**
angels]

in the **attitude** _____of **singing**
and [of] **praising** **their God**

{AL}

[Note: "Attitude " is archaic language for being in a position that implies an action or a mental state.]

9 And **it came to pass**

that he [my father **Lehi**] _____ **saw** **One[Christ] Descending Out**
of the Midst of Heaven

***And** he [my father **Lehi**] _____ **beheld**
that His [**Christ's**] **luster** was above that
of the sun **at noon-day**

[Heb. 05 – The use of the word "exceedingly"]

[1 Nephi 1]

10 *and he [my father **Lehi**] also saw Twelve Others [or **Christ's** Apostles] following **Him** ee
 *and their brightness did exceed that
 of the stars in the firmament
 11 *And they [the Twelve Others and **Christ**]
 came down 06
 *and went forth upon the face of the earth

[Note: The verbs “came” and “went” above are examples of what is called the “prophetic perfect” tense. This is when prophets that have viewed something in vision speak of it in the “past” tense as if to stress the point that it definitely will happen. The above statement has a duality to it that implies not only Lehi’s time, but the Meridian of time.]

Christ Gives Lehi a Book Containing God's Covenant Plan of Salvation
Lehi Reads It ---a Part Speaks of the Destruction of Jerusalem

*and **The First [Christ]** came
 *and stood before my father [Lehi]
 *and **[The First--Christ]** gave unto him my father [Lehi] _____ a **book**
 *and bade him that he my father [Lehi] should read [the **book**]

12 *And **it came to pass**
 that as he my father [Lehi] read
 he my father [Lehi] was filled with **the Spirit of the Lord**
 13 And he my father [Lehi] read saying [Quote]
Wo wo unto Jerusalem 07
 For I [Lehi] have seen thine **abominations** 08
 Yea and **MANY things**
 did my father [Lehi] _____ read _____ concerning Jerusalem
 that it [Jerusalem] should be **destroyed**
 and [that] the inhabitants there of [Jerusalem] [should be **destroyed**]
 [and] **MANY** should **perish by the sword**
 and **MANY** should **be carried away captive** into Babylon

[Note: There is duality here. While Babylon was a location, it also symbolized the captivity and depravity of Hell.]

14 And **it came to pass**
 that **when** my father [Lehi] had read
 and [had] **seen** MANY GREAT and marvelous things [*P = saw*] {AG}
 he my father [Lehi] did **exclaim** MANY [GREAT and marvelous] things unto **the Lord**
 such as [Quote] GREAT and marvelous are **Thy works**
O Lord God Almighty

[Par. ee-- The use of many “and”s to connect lines]
[Heb. 06 – The use of the “prophetic perfect” tense]

[Heb. 07 -- Duplication = amplified]
[Heb. 08 – Plurals = amplified]

and *Thy throne is high in _____ the heavens
 and *Thy power 09
 and [Thy] goodness
 and [Thy] mercy are over ALL the inhabitants of the earth ff
 [P= is]
 and because [that] Thou [O Lord God Almighty] art merciful [deleted 1837]
 Thou [O Lord God Almighty] wilt NOT suffer those
 who come unto Thee _____ that they shall perish

[Note: These quotes were apparently taken from the plates of Lehi, the translation of which was lost.]

15 And after this manner was the language
 of my father [Lehi] in the praising
 of His God [Almighty]
 for his _____ soul did rejoice 10
 and his whole heart was filled 11
 because of the things gg
 which he [my father Lehi] had seen
 yea [because of the things]
 which the Lord _____ had shown unto him [P= shewn]

[Note: Here a "soul" or "heart" substituting for what is meant ("Lehi") is an example of "metonymy."]

*Nephi's Record Is an Abridgment of the Record of Lehi
and an Account of His Own Life of Covenant Obedience*

16 And now
 [A] I [Nephi] do NOT make a full account of the things [Bookend] hh
 [B] which my father [Lehi] hath written ii
 [B] for he [my father Lehi] hath written MANY things
 [C] which he [my father Lehi] saw in visions
 [C] and [which he my father Lehi saw] in dreams
 [B] and he [my father Lehi] also hath written MANY things
 [D] which he [my father Lehi] prophesied
 [D] and [which he my father Lehi] spake unto his children
 [A] _____ of which [things]
 I [Nephi] shall NOT make a full account [Bookend]

[Heb. 09 – Repetition of possessive pronoun]

[Par. ff – Distribution list]

[Heb. 10 – Metonymy (1 thing for another)]

[Heb. 11-- Word pair]

[Par. gg – Circular repetition "things"]

[Par. hh -- Inclusion or "Bookends"]

[Par. ii -- Simple synonymous parallelism]

17 **But** [A] I [Nephi] shall _____ make an **account** of my proceedings in my **days** jj
Behold [B] I [Nephi] make an **abridgment** of the **record** of **my father** [Lehi]
 [C] **upon plates** which I [Nephi] have **made**
 [C] [**upon plates made**] with mine own hands

Wherefore

after [that] [B] I [Nephi] have **abridged** the **record** of **my father** [Lehi] [deleted 1837]
then [A] will I [Nephi] make an **account** of mine own **life** [Editorial Promise]
 [Adapted from Greg Wright (1976:2) and Donald Parry (1992:2)]

*The Jews Mock Lehi for Declaring Covenant Disobedience
and Prophesying Destruction*

18 **Therefore** 12
 I [Nephi] would
that ye [plural] should **know**
that **after the Lord** had **shown** so MANY marvelous **things** unto [P= shewn]
my father **Lehi**
yea _____ [so MANY marvelous **things**]
 concerning the _____ **destruction** of **Jerusalem** [duality]

[Note: Jerusalem represents a geographical locality, but Jerusalem also represents the location of the temple and thus the center of the covenant promise between the Lord and his covenant people.]

Behold 13
 he [my father **Lehi**] _____ **went forth** among the [covenant] **people**
and [he **my father** **Lehi**] **began to** **prophecy** 14
and [he **my father** **Lehi** **began**] **to** **declare** unto them [the **covenant people**]
 concerning the **things**
which he [my father **Lehi**] had both **seen**
 and **heard**

Lehi's Testimony of Christ Is Rejected and His Life Sought

19 **And** **it came to pass** **that** the **Jews** did **mock him**
 because of the **things**
which he [my father **Lehi**] _____ **testified**
 of them [the **Jews**]
for [he **my father** **Lehi**] truly **testified**
 of their **wickedness**
and [of] their **abominations**

[Par. jj – Chiastic or inverse parallelism

[Heb. 14—Use of the words “began to”]

[Heb. 12—Use of the word “Therefore” to initiate]

[Heb. 13—Use of the word “Behold” to initiate]

	And	[he <u>my father Lehi</u>]	<u>testified</u>		15
				that the <u>things</u>	
	which	he [<u>my father Lehi</u>]	<u>saw</u>		
			and	<u>heard</u>	
				and also the <u>things</u>	
	which	he [<u>my father Lehi</u>]	<u>read</u>	in the book	
			<u>manifested</u>	<u>plainly</u>	
			of the	<u>coming of A Messiah</u>	
				[the <u>Redeemer</u> <u>of the world</u>]	
			and	[<u>manifested</u> <u>plainly</u>] also	
			[of] the	<u>redemption of the world</u>	
20		And when	<u>the Jews</u> <u>heard</u>	these <u>things</u>	
	[that	he <u>my father Lehi</u>	<u>saw</u>		
			and	<u>heard</u>	
			and	<u>read</u> in a book]	
			they [<u>the Jews</u>]	were <u>angry</u> with him ___ [<u>*my father Lehi</u>]	
	yea		[they <u>the Jews</u>]	were <u>angry</u> even as with <u>*the prophets of old</u>	16 17
		<u>whom</u> they [<u>the Jews</u>]	had cast out		kk
	and	[<u>whom</u> they <u>the Jews</u>]	had] stoned		LL
	and	[<u>whom</u> they <u>the Jews</u>]	had] slain		
		and they [<u>the Jews</u>]	also sought <u>his life</u>		[duality]
	that	they [<u>the Jews</u>]	might take it [<u>his life</u>]	away	

[Note: In the above statement, Nephi compares “my father Lehi” with “the prophets of old.” The circular repetition of the term “my father Lehi” emphasizes Lehi’s link with the “fathers” of old.” Additionally, the parallel structure shows, that “my father Lehi” is actually aligned with the prophets of old. This is an example of a Hebraism called “synecdoche,” but is better remembered as “a part that refers to or designates the whole.” That is, Lehi is an example of the “prophets.” But in turn, the prophets represented Christ, and proclaimed the coming of a Messiah, the Redeemer of the world. The Jews not only sought the life of the prophets, but they sought to destroy or “take away” the message of the coming of Christ—thus the duality. The words “of old” make the various prophets of any age “part of the whole.”

The circular repetition of “my father Lehi” also emphasizes that Nephi is abridging the Record of Lehi, and that the name Lehi is associated with the Abrahamic covenant – see the Introduction and the Commentary.]

[Heb. 15—To repeat “testified” 3 times = highest degree]

[Heb. 16 – Simile (“as”) = comparison]

[Heb. 17 – Synecdoche = a part designates the whole]

[Par. kk – Working out]

[Par. LL – Repetition “they” or “the Jews”]

The Lord Will Deliver His Righteous Covenant People

But behold I **Nephi** will show unto you [covenant language – *Nephi's Intent*] [P= shewn]
 that the tender mercies of **the Lord** are over ALL **those** [P = is over all **them**] {AG}
 whom **He** [**the Lord**] hath **chosen**
 because of their **faith** [in **the Lord**]
 to make them **mighty**
 even unto the **power** of **deliverance**

[Note: Nephi has just given the definition of what constitutes a “chosen” people. It is available to ALL; it involves covenants with the Lord, faith in the Lord, and a will to do and be what the Lord commands them to do and be.]

[Note: According to Donald Parry (2007:2-3), 1 Nephi 1:15-18 is an example of a **complex chiasmic parallelism**. A brief outline of the parallel phrases is as follows:

- 15 And after this manner was the language of my father in the praising of his God
 for his soul did rejoice
 and his whole heart was filled because of the things
A which **he had seen**
B **the Lord had shown**
- 16 **C** _____ **1.** I [**Nephi**] **do not make a full account**
D _____ **2.** **my father hath written**
3. hath written many things
4. visions
4' dreams
3' hath written many things
2' which he prophesied and spake
E 1' I [**Nephi**] **shall not make a full account**
E' a. I [**Nephi**] **shall make an account**
of my proceedings in my days.
- 17 **D'** _____ **b.** **abridgment of the record**
c. I have made
c' mine own hands
b' abridged the record
C' _____ **a'** I [**Nephi**] _____ **make an account**
of mine own life
- 18 **B'1.** **the Lord had shown**
2. things
3. people
4. to prophesy
4' to declare
3' them
2' things
A' _____ **1'** **he had . . . seen**