



Type: Book Chapter

---

## Chapter III

Author(s): George Q. Cannon

Source: *The Life of Nephi, the Son of Lehi*

Published: Salt Lake City; Juvenile Instructor Office, 1883

Pages: 18-21

---

**Abstract:** Faith of Nephi and its Effects—Sam's Belief—Revelation with Promise to Nephi—Land of Promise, Choice Above other Lands—Nephi to be a Ruler and a Teacher to his Brethren—Required to Return to Jerusalem—His Willingness—Lehi Gratified at His Faith—Laban and Brass Plates—Angry and Refused to Give Them to Laman—Threatened His Life—Laman and Lemuel Discouraged—Nephi's Proposition—His Brothers Agree to it

---

## CHAPTER III.

FAITH OF NEPHI AND ITS EFFECTS—SAM'S BELIEF—REVELATION WITH PROMISE TO NEPHI—LAND OF PROMISE, CHOICE ABOVE OTHER LANDS—NEPHI TO BE A RULER AND A TEACHER TO HIS BRETHERN—REQUIRED TO RETURN TO JERUSALEM—HIS WILLINGNESS—LEHI GRATIFIED AT HIS FAITH—LABAN AND BRASS PLATES—ANGRY, AND REFUSED TO GIVE THEM TO LAMAN—THREATENED HIS LIFE—LAMAN AND LEMUEL DISCOURAGED—NEPHI'S PROPOSITION—HIS BROTHERS AGREE TO IT.

IT is at this point we begin to get an insight into Nephi's character. He was, as he tells us, exceeding young, though large in stature, yet he had great desires to know of the mysteries of God, and he cried unto the Lord. The Lord visited him and softened his heart, and he believed all the words of his father. This kept him from rebelling against his father as his two brothers had done. He told his brother Sam what the Lord had manifested unto him by His Holy Spirit, and he believed his words. From all that has come down to us concerning this older brother of Nephi's, Sam, he was a man of great worth, not an aspiring, jealous, envious man, but humble, believing, obedient, steadfast, true and faithful. He was not gifted like his brother Nephi; but, though older, he recognized Nephi's authority, submitted to his direction and counsel, received his teachings and always stood by him in all the dissensions and difficulties which the unbelief, jealousy and envy of their two oldest brothers created.

Nephi also told Laman and Lemuel that which the Lord had shown him; but it was of no avail. They did not believe him. Their unbelief grieved him, and he cried unto the Lord for them. The Lord then blessed him because of his faith, and said to him that he had sought Him diligently with lowliness of heart. He told him further that, if they would keep His

commandments, they would prosper, and they should be led to the land of promise, a land which He had prepared for them, and which was choice above other lands; but if his brethren should rebel against him, they should be cut off from the presence of the Lord; if he, Nephi, would keep His commandments he should be made a ruler and a teacher over his brethren. He also told him at this time that in the day his brethren should rebel against Him, the Lord, He would curse them with a sore curse, and they should have no power over the children of Nephi, except they should also rebel against Him; and if they should rebel against Him, they should be a scourge unto them to stir them up in the ways of remembrance. From this we see that the Lord had chosen Nephi to be the ruler and teacher of his brethren, and this in consequence of his faith in seeking Him, and because of their iniquities.

In this revelation to Nephi appears for the first time in the record any allusion to the land of promise, the choice land above all others, which He destined them to inhabit. Doubtless the Lord had already revealed this to Lehi. But it does not appear. Nephi informs us there were many things his father had written that he had seen in visions and dreams and that he had prophesied about, which he, Nephi, had not given a full account of.

The selection by the Lord of Nephi to be their ruler and their teacher was always a cause of anger and trouble to Laman and Lemuel. They themselves never lived in a way to entitle them either to rule or teach; and yet they were never heartily willing that Nephi should do so. Laman had the birthright as the oldest son, but he did not put himself in a position to exercise the rights which belonged to it. It was with him as with Cain, to whom the Lord said: "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? And if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his (speaking of Abel) desire and thou shalt rule over him."

Laman would not do well. The Lord could not, consistently with His attributes and laws, sustain him in his wrong doing and make him the ruler; and because Nephi did obey the Lord, and thereby obtained the leadership, both Laman and Lemuel hated him.

After communing with the Lord Nephi returned to his father's tent. Then Lehi told him of a dream which he had had, in which the Lord had commanded him to send Nephi and his brothers back to Jerusalem to get the record of the Jews and the genealogy of their forefathers which were engraven upon plates of brass, and were in the possession of a man by the name of Laban, who was, as well as Lehi, a descendant of Joseph. Lehi told Nephi that his brothers murmured at this request, and said it was a hard thing which he had required of them; but, he added, "I have not required it of them; it is a commandment of the Lord." He told Nephi to go and he should be favored of the Lord, because he had not murmured. Nephi replied that he would go and do what the Lord had commanded.

"For," said he, "I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them."

There is a volume of meaning in this memorable remark of Nephi's, and it furnishes us the key to the actions of his entire life and the unfailing success which attended all his movements. Though he was but a youth, this expression shows that already he was full of faith. When God commanded him, all hesitation and doubt disappeared. He was ready to do his part, perfectly satisfied that the Lord would make up all that was necessary. The record informs us that when Lehi heard these words, he was exceedingly glad, for he knew that his son had been blessed of the Lord. This must have been a great comfort to him under the circumstances. However rebellious and hard the older ones might be, now he was not entirely alone; for here was one, at least, who could understand and sustain him.

The four sons, Laman, Lemuel, Sam and Nephi, took their tents and started for Jerusalem. After reaching there they held a consultation, and decided to cast lots to know which of them should have an interview with Laban. The lot fell upon Laman, the oldest. He now had the opportunity to show his ability. But he had weakened himself before he started by his murmuring and calling this a hard thing to do. One could

therefore guess beforehand how his attempt would result. He saw Laban in his house and had a talk with him, during which he asked him for the records which were engraved upon the plates of brass, and which also contained his father's genealogy. Laban got angry and would not let him have the records; but thrust him out, and called him a robber, and threatened to kill him. Laman ran away from him, glad doubtless to escape without injury. His account to his brothers of his reception made them all feel sorrowful, and the older ones concluded it was no use to try any more to get the brass plates, and they would return to their father. This was not Nephi's feeling. He had been sent for those records; the Lord had given the command; and he was determined to get them before he returned. He told his brothers that, as the Lord lived and they lived, they would not go back to their father until they had accomplished that which the Lord had commanded them. It was at this juncture, when obstacles had to be overcome and the others were ready to succumb to them, that Nephi's superiority began to exhibit itself. He had been humble and sought unto the Lord; now the Lord was giving him strength and bringing into exercise those qualities which made him the leader among his brothers. Instead of returning, he proposed they should go and gather up the gold and silver and other riches which their father had left, when he moved out, and take these to Laban in exchange for the plates. He pointed out to his brothers how necessary it was they should have these records. They needed them to preserve for their children the language of the fathers, as well as the words of their holy prophets which had been delivered to them by the Spirit and power of God from the beginning of the world up to that time. His reasoning and arguments had weight with them and they agreed to his plan.