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Lesson 47 - The Liahona

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LESSON 47.—THE LIAHONA.

PLACE.—*The wilderness, near the Red Sea.* TIME.—*About 600 B. C.*

TEXT.—*I. Nephi 16: 9-16.*

9. And it came to pass the voice of the Lord spake unto my father by night, and commanded him that on the morrow he should take his journey into the wilderness.

10. And it came to pass that as my father arose in the morning, and went forth to the tent door, to his great astonishment he beheld upon the ground a round ball¹ of curious workmanship: and it was of fine brass. And within the ball were two spindles: and the one pointed the way whither we should go into the wilderness.

11. And it came to pass that we did gather together whatsoever things we should carry into the wilderness, and all the remainder of our provisions which the Lord had given unto us; and we did take seed² of every kind, that we might carry into the wilderness.

12. And it came to pass that we did take our tents, and depart into the wilderness, across the river Laman³.

13. And it came to pass that we traveled for the space of four days, nearly a south, southeast direction, and we did pitch our tents again; and we did call the name of the place Shazer.

14. And it came to pass that we did take our bows and our arrows, and go forth into the wilderness to slay food for our families; and after we had slain food for our families, we did return again to our families in the wilderness, to the place of Shazer. And we did go forth again in the wilderness, following the same direction, keeping in the most fertile parts of the wilderness, which were in the borders near the Red Sea.

15. And it came to pass that we did travel for the space of many days, slaying food by the way, with our bows and our arrows, and our stones and our slings;

16. And we did follow the directions of the ball, which led us in the more fertile parts of the wilderness.

¹I. Nephi 16: 26-29. 18: 12, 21. II. Nephi 5: 12, Alma 37, 38-47. ²I. Nephi 8: 1. 18: 23, 24. ³I. Nephi 2: 8.

LESSON STATEMENT.

Shortly after the marriage of his sons to the daughters of Ishmael, Lehi was directed by the Lord to continue his

journey the next day towards the Land of Promise. The little colony had been organizing and resting for some time at the place they had first selected on the shores of the Red Sea, near a little stream which Lehi called the river Laman, in honor of his eldest son. The next morning when Lehi arose and went to his tent door he found near by a round ball of curious workmanship. It was made of fine brass and within it were two spindles or needles, one of which pointed the way the company should travel. The country through which they were about to pass was new to them and they had no guide who knew the way. They were acquainted with the region between Jerusalem and the Red Sea, and consequently did not need any person or thing to point out that road. From this time it would be different, all was strange to them; without divine help they might die for want of water and food, or fall into the hands of the inhabitants of the land, or entirely lose their way in the desert. So the Lord provided this ball, which they called a Liahona. It had the strange peculiarity of working according to their faith, and, when necessary, writing would appear on it, giving instructions to them what to do in cases of emergency. In fact, it took the place and performed the work of

the fiery, cloudy pillar that went before the Israelites when Jehovah led them out of Egypt in the days of Moses. This Liahona first led the company for four days in a direction a little east of south along the borders of the Red Sea. At the end of these four days they rested. They called the place where they camped Shazer. Here they hunted and killed game for food, and then resumed their journey along the borders of the Red Sea. And so they continued to follow the directions of the ball, which led them through the more fertile parts of the wilderness. By and by they changed their direction and traveled almost directly eastward, across the Arabian Peninsula, until they reached the waters of the great ocean. The Prophet Joseph Smith says, "They traveled nearly a south south-east direction until they came to the nineteenth degree of north latitude, then nearly east to the Sea of Arabia."

NOTES.

RIVER LAMAN.—Maps of this region show one short stream running between two ranges of hills and emptying itself on the Arabian or eastern shore into the Gulf of Akabah, near its southern extremity. This stream is probably the river Laman.

THE LIAHONA.—This instrument must not be mistaken for the mariner's compass. The latter shows the traveler which way he *is going*, as one of its needles always points to the north; but the needle, or spindle, in the Liahona pointed the way that Lehi and his people *should go*, and worked according to their faith, not according to the laws that govern the inclinations of the needle in the mariner's compass. The two instruments are entirely different, the only similarity is that both are used for the same purpose.

WHAT WE MAY LEARN FROM THIS LESSON.

1. That when men have done all they can to carry out the commands of God,

He will provide further means to enable them to perform what more may be necessary to accomplish His purposes. Thus He led the Hebrews through the wilderness of Sinai with a fiery, cloudy pillar, and the people of Lehi through Arabia by means of the Liahona. 2. This lesson gives an account of the journey of Lehi from the time he left the river Laman—its course was for a short time a little east of south and then almost due east. 3. During this time the company sustained itself on the game caught by the hunters of the party.

QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON.

1. What is the subject of this lesson?
2. What did the Lord command Lehi?
3. What did Lehi find the next morning?
4. Where did he find it?
5. What was peculiar about it?
6. Of what was it made?
7. What did Lehi call it?
8. How did one of the spindles point?
9. What sometimes appeared on it?
10. In what did it differ from the mariner's compass?
11. What did the party carry into the wilderness?
12. What did they do with the seeds?
13. For how many days did they journey before they again rested?
14. What did they call the place where they rested?
15. How did they obtain food?
16. Into what parts of the wilderness did the Liahona lead them?
17. What course did they afterwards take?
18. To what place did this lead them?
19. What does this lesson teach us with regard to the dealings of God with His people?
20. What did He provide to guide the Israelites in the days of Moses?