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Lesson 45 - The Plates of Brass

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LESSON 45.—THE PLATES OF BRASS.

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

TEXT.—*I. Nephi 3: 2-9.*

2. And it came to pass that he [Lehi] spake unto me, saying, Behold I have dreamed a dream, in the which the Lord hath commanded me that thou and thy brethren shall return to Jerusalem.

3. For behold, Laban hath the record of the Jews,¹ and also a genealogy of thy forefathers,² and they are engraven upon plates of brass.³

4. Wherefore, the Lord hath commanded me that thou and thy brothers should go unto the house of Laban,⁴ and seek the records, and bring them down hither into the wilderness.⁵

5. And now, behold thy brothers murmur, saying, It is a hard thing which I have required of them; but, behold, I have not required it of them; but it is a commandment of the Lord.

6. Therefore go, my son, and thou shalt be favored of the Lord, because thou hast not murmured.

7. And it came to pass that I, Nephi, said unto my father, I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded, for 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.

8. And it came to pass that when my father had heard these words, he was exceeding glad, for he knew that I had been blessed of the Lord.

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

¹I. Nephi 3: 12, 13, 19, 20, 24; 5: 10-13, 21, 22. ²I. Nephi 5: 14-16; 6: 1, 2. Alma 37: 3. ³I. Nephi 4: 24, 38; 5: 17, 19, 13: 23; 19: 22. II. Nephi 4: 1, 2; 5: 12. Mosiah 1: 3, 4; 28: 20. Alma 37: 3-5. III. Nephi 1: 2. ⁴I. Nephi 3: 10-14, 22-27; 4: 7-25; ⁵I. Nephi 4: 38; 5: 1.

LESSON STATEMENT.

Soon after the arrival of Lehi and his family on the borders of the Red Sea the Lord gave Lehi a commandment that his sons should return to

Jerusalem to obtain certain brass plates, upon which was engraven a history of the world, from the creation to the days of Zedekiah, and more particularly a record of the Jews. The plates also contained the genealogy of Lehi and his family. When the elder sons of Lehi heard this command they objected. They said it was a hard thing that their father required of them; for they had no faith that they could obtain the plates, as they were in the hands of a rich, wicked and powerful man, named Laban, who would not be willing to give them up. Their father told them that it was not he, but the Lord, who desired them to obtain the plates. This did not satisfy them: they still murmured. But Nephi, when he heard the command, at once consented to go, for, he told his father, he had learned that God gave no commandments to men, unless He prepared a way for them to accomplish the thing which He required.

When Lehi saw how great was the faith of his son, Nephi, he was exceedingly glad, for he knew that the Lord had blessed him. Persuaded by Nephi the brothers consented to go; then with their tents they journeyed back to Jerusalem. After two unsuccessful attempts Nephi, on the third effort obtained the plates, and the young men

returned with them to the tents of the family in the wilderness. Lehi greatly rejoiced when the plates were given into his charge, and offered up a sacrifice to the Lord in token of his gratitude. These plates remained with the people of Nephi from this time to the destruction of the race at Cumorah, nearly a thousand years later.

NOTES.

LABAN.—A cruel and avaricious man of the tribe of Joseph. He resided at Jerusalem, and was the custodian of the records engraven on the plates of brass. When Laman asked him for the plates, he treated him very roughly, and turned him out of doors. The sons of Lehi then went to their own house, gathered up many precious things and offered them to Laban for the plates. Seeing how great was the value of these things, Laban took possession of them, drove the young men away, and sent his servants after them to kill them. A night or so after Laban got drunk, and in that condition was found by Nephi lying near his house. Nephi, by command of the Lord, slew Laban and obtained possession of the plates.

THE RECORDS.—It was very desirable that Lehi should carry with him to the land to which God was taking him a record of his fathers, that his posterity might know whence they sprang, to what race they belonged, and be able to retain a knowledge of God and of the true faith, that the nation might not dwindle and perish in unbelief. The possession of these plates also tended to preserve their language from corruption.

GENEALOGY.—A pedigree. A list of family names, etc., from father to son for generations.

WHAT WE MAY LEARN FROM THIS LESSON.

1. That God required the sons of Lehi to return to Jerusalem to obtain certain plates of brass containing the record of the Jews, that were held by a man named Laban. 2. That the elder

sons of Lehi murmured, saying it was a hard thing that was required of them. 3. That Nephi did not murmur, for he knew that God never gives a command to men without He prepares a way for its accomplishment; in other words, God never requires men to do impossibilities. 4. That Lehi was much pleased at this manifestation of Nephi's faith. 5. That the young men went up to Jerusalem, and after some difficulties obtained the plates.

QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON.

1. What did God require of the sons of Lehi? 2. How did the elder sons feel about it? 3. How did Nephi feel? 4. What did he say? 5. How did Nephi's faith affect the others? 6. How did God open up the way for the accomplishment of His purpose? 7. Why did He desire that Lehi should have these records? 8. What did they contain? 9. Of what good would they be to the posterity of Lehi? 10. What do you mean by posterity? 11. What is the meaning of the word genealogy? 12. Who was Laban? 13. Where did he live? 14. What was his character? 15. Who slew him? 16. Why did Nephi slay him? 17. For what causes was he worthy of death? 18. Who obtained the plates of brass? 19. To whom did he take them? 20. How long were they preserved?