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Lesson 59 - The Building of the Ship

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LESSON 59.—THE BUILDING OF THE SHIP.

PLACE.—Coast of the Arabian Sea. TIME.—About 590 B. C.

TEXT.—I. Nephi 17 : 17—24, 47, 48.

17. And when my brethren saw that I was about to build a ship, they began to murmur against me, saying, Our brother is a fool, for he thinketh that he can build a ship : yea, and he also thinketh that he can cross these great waters.

18. And thus my brethren did complain against me, and were desirous that they might not labor, for they did not believe that I could build a ship ; neither would they believe that I was instructed of the Lord.

19. And now it came to pass that I, Nephi, was exceeding sorrowful because of the hardness of their hearts; and now when they saw that I began to be sorrowful, they were glad in their hearts, insomuch that they did rejoice over me, saying, We knew that ye could not construct a ship, for we knew that ye were lacking in judgment; wherefore, thou canst not accomplish so great a work ;

20. And thou art like unto our father, led away by the foolish imaginations of his heart; yea, he hath led us out of the land of Jerusalem. * * *

21. Behold these many years we have suffered in the wilderness, which time we might have enjoyed our possessions, and the land of our inheritance : yea, and we might have been happy ;

22. And we know that the people who were in the land of Jerusalem, were a righteous people ; for they kept the statutes and the judgments of the Lord, and all his commandments, according to the law of Moses. * *

23. And it came to pass that I, Nephi, spake unto them, saying, Do ye believe that our fathers, who were the children of Israel, would have been led away out of the hands of the Egyptians, if they had not hearkened unto the words of the Lord ?

24. Yea, do ye suppose that they would have been led out of bondage, if the Lord had not commanded Moses that he should lead them out of bondage ?

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47. Behold, my soul is rent with anguish because of you, and my heart is pained : I fear lest ye shall be cast off for ever. Behold, I am full of the Spirit of God, insomuch that my frame has no strength.

48. And now it came to pass that when I had spoken these words, they were angry with me, and were desirous to throw me into the depths of the sea ; and as they came forth to lay their hands upon me, I spake unto them saying, In the name of the Almighty God, I command you that ye touch me not, for I am filled with the power of God, even unto the consuming of my flesh ; and whoso shall lay their hands upon me, shall wither even as a

dried reed ; and he shall be as naught before the power of God, for God shall smite him.

1. I. Nephi, 2nd chapter.

When convenient, the whole of the chapter, from the 17th to the 48th verse, should be read in connection with this lesson.

LESSON STATEMENT.

When his brothers saw that Nephi was about to build a ship, they began to ridicule him. They would give him no help, for they did not believe he was instructed of the Lord. Nephi became very sorrowful because of the hardness of their hearts. When they saw this they were glad, and tauntingly told him they knew that he was lacking in judgment and could not accomplish so great a work.

They reproached him with being like their father, in being led away by the foolish imaginations of his heart. They recited their imaginary grievances against Lehi for leading them out of Jerusalem and bringing upon them the sufferings which they and their wives had endured since leaving that city. Warming up with their complaints, they said it would have been better for their wives to have died before they left Jerusalem than to have had such afflictions as they had borne. While they were suffering all these hardships in the desert they might, they said, have been happily enjoying themselves at home. As for the people of Jerusalem, notwithstanding their father's condemnation of them, they declared they knew them to

be a righteous people; for they kept the statutes and judgments of the Lord, and all His commandments according to the law of Moses. But their father had led them away, because they had hearkened to him, and now Nephi, their brother, was just like him.

Nephi, according to his custom when they grumbled and found fault, commenced to reason with and teach them. He cited to them the history of the children of Israel under the leadership of Moses, what the Lord had done and the mighty works He had enabled Moses to do. He did not spare them in his rebukes. The only effect his words and remonstrances appeared to have upon them was to enrage them. They went so far as to attempt to throw him into the depths of the sea; but as they advanced towards him for that purpose, he commanded them in the name of the Almighty God not to touch him. Nephi was filled with the power of God, even unto the consuming of his flesh. He had so much power on this occasion that they dared not lay their hands upon him or even touch him with their fingers. Neither dared they venture to do so for many days for fear lest they should wither before him.

NOTES.

LAND OF JERUSALEM.—The name by which Judea, (the land of their forefathers,) was known to the Nephites. (I. Nephi 2:11; 16:35. and other places.)

MOSES.—The great lawgiver to Israel. Frequent references are made to him in the Book of Mormon, Lehi refers to the prophecy of Joseph, the son of Jacob, of the coming and mission of Moses (II. Nephi 3:9, 10, 16, 17). Nephi and others make mention of his dividing the waters of the Red Sea (I. Nephi 4:2; 17: 24—27; Helaman 8:11). The ancient Nephite prophets also speak of his foreknowledge of the coming of the Messiah (I. Nephi 22:20, 21; Mosiah 13:33; Helaman 8:15, 16;) of his smiting the rock for water (II. Nephi 25:20); of the lifting up of the brazen serpent in the wilderness (Helaman 8:14); of his burial by the Lord (Alma 45: 19). Jesus said to the Nephites, "I am he of whom Moses spake" (III. Nephi 20:23). The five books of Moses are mentioned (I Nephi 5:11), and the law of Moses is spoken of more than forty times.

WHAT WE MAY LEARN FROM THIS LESSON.

1. That when Nephi's brethren saw he was about to build a ship they began to ridicule him. 2. Neither would they assist him, as they did not believe that the Lord had commanded him to build it. 3. That this conduct caused Nephi

much sorrow. 4. His sorrow pleased his discontented brethren, for they thought they had discouraged him. 5. That Nephi reasoned with them, and recounted to them the dealings of God with their fathers. 6. That this made them angry and they sought to throw him into the sea. 7. But the power of heaven came upon him and he commanded them in the name of the Almighty not to touch him, for if any of them did so they should wither as a dried reed; so they did not dare to make the attempt. 8. That the mercy of God is sometimes made manifest in the protection of his faithful servants by clothing them with miraculous or unusual powers, such as those conferred upon Nephi when his brethren sought to take his life by drowning him.

QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON.

1. How did Nephi's brothers act when they saw he was about to build a ship? 2. What effect did this have on Nephi? 3. How did Nephi's sorrow affect his rebellious kinsmen? 4. Whom did they say Nephi was like? 5. What complaints did they bring against their father? 6. What did they say regarding the people in Jerusalem? 7. Why did Nephi's brethren thus defend that people? 8. How did Nephi know that they were wicked? 9. What course did Nephi now take with the grumblers? 10. Whose history did he rehearse to them? 11. Who was Moses? 12. What effect had Nephi's rebuke on his brethren? 13. What did they try to do with him? 14. What was the result? 15. If they had touched him, what would have happened? 16. From whom was this miraculous power received? 17. For what purpose was Nephi thus endowed with this miraculous gift? 18. According to this lesson what ought we to do when the Lord commands us? 19. Why was the Lord more pleased with Nephi than with his brethren? 20. What do you think of the difference between the character of Nephi and that of his brethren, as shown in this lesson? 21. Which ought we to imitate, and why? 22. Why was the Lord willing to help Nephi in building a ship? 23. Why did God give Nephi so much power over his brethren?