

January 15–21: 1 Nephi 6–10, "Come and Partake of the Fruit"

Lehi's Dream of the Tree of Life

Lehi's dream reminds me of Jesus' parable of the sower. Each categories how different people respond to the gospel message

In the parable of the sower Jesus identifies 4 different kinds of soil that the seed is planted into:

- Some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up
- Some fell upon stony places... they had no deepness of earth
- Some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them
- Others fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit

Let's read Christ's interpretation of the parable

Matthew 13:18-23

18 Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower.

19 When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.

20 But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it;

21 Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.

22 He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.

23 But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

He separates those who hear the Word into 4 categories:

Hears the word but does not understand it (Fell by the way side)

Only develops weak roots and is easily offended (Fell on stony places)

Understands and believes but cares more for the world (Fell among thorns)

Understands the word, nurtures it, and brings forth fruit (Fell on good ground)

The first representation in Lehi's dream is of the person who's heart is fully receptive to the word, nurtures it, and partakes of the fruit. The example is Lehi himself.

1Ne 8:5-12

5 And it came to pass that I saw a man, and he was dressed in a white robe; and he came and stood before me.

6 And it came to pass that he spake unto me, and bade me follow him.

7 And it came to pass that as I followed him I beheld myself that I was in a dark and

dreary waste.

8 And after I had traveled for the space of many hours in darkness, I began to pray unto the Lord that he would have mercy on me, according to the multitude of his tender mercies.

9 And it came to pass after I had prayed unto the Lord I beheld a large and spacious field.

10 And it came to pass that I beheld a tree, whose fruit was desirable to make one happy.

11 And it came to pass that I did go forth and partake of the fruit thereof; and I beheld that it was most sweet, above all that I ever before tasted. Yea, and I beheld that the fruit thereof was white, to exceed all the whiteness that I had ever seen.

12 And as I partook of the fruit thereof it filled my soul with exceedingly great joy; wherefore, I began to be desirous that my family should partake of it also; for I knew that it was desirable above all other fruit.

What do you think “dark and dreary wast” and “traveling in darkness” represent?

(The world)

Jeffrey R. Holland,

"In the course of life all of us spend time in 'dark and dreary' places, wildernesses, circumstances of sorrow or fear or discouragement. Our present day is filled with global distress over financial crises, energy problems, terrorist attacks, and natural calamities.... More serious than these are matters of ethical, moral, and spiritual decay seen in populations large and small, at home and abroad." (CR, Oct. 2008)

How does Lehi come out of this state?

(I began to pray unto the Lord that he would have mercy on me)

Then he saw a partook of the fruit that was, “Most sweet, above all that I ever before tasted” and “White to exceed all whiteness”

What does the fruit of this tree represent?

Todd Christofferson

“Keeping the Lord’s commandments enables us more fully and more easily to feel His love. The strait and narrow path of the commandments leads directly to the tree of life, and the tree and its fruit, the sweetest and ‘most desirable above all things’ (1Ne 11:22), are a representation of the love of God and fill the soul ‘with exceedingly great joy.’ (CR, Oct. 2019)

What are some of the phrases used to describe the tree and the fruit?

Most sweet, above all that I ever before tasted (8:11)

White to exceed all whiteness (8:11)
Desirable above all other fruit (8:12)
Beauty... exceeding... all beauty (11:8)
Precious above all (11:9)
Most desirable above all things (11:22)
The most joyous to the soul (11:23)
Greatest of all the gifts of god (15:36)

What are some of the blessing that we are promised throughout the scriptures when we partake of the love of God?

Born of the spirit: 1Jhn 4:7, "love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God"

No contentions: 4Ne 1:15, "And it came to pass that there was no contention in the land, because of the love of God which did dwell in the hearts of the people"

Truly love and help others: 1Jhn 5:2, "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God"

All things work to your good: Rom 8:28, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God"

No fear: Moroni 8:16, "I fear not what man can do; for perfect love casteth out all fear"

Delivered from temptation: D&C 95:1, "Verily, thus saith the Lord unto you whom I love, and whom I love I also chasten that their sins may be forgiven, for with the chastisement I prepare a way for their deliverance in all things out of temptation, and I have loved you"

Receive all that God has: 1 Corinthians 2:9 "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him"

David A. Bednar

"The greatest manifestation of God's love for His children is the mortal ministry, atoning sacrifice, and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. The fruit on the tree can be considered a symbol for the blessings of the Savior's Atonement.

"Lehi's instant response to partaking of the fruit of the tree and experiencing great joy was an increased desire to share with and serve his family. Thus, as he turned to Christ, he also turned outward in love and service." (CR, Oct. 2014)

Next we see a representation of the seed landing on the wayside; those who hear but do not understand. Those who start on the path but do not hold to the rod and get lost in the mists of darkness.

1Ne 8:19-23

19 And I beheld a rod of iron, and it extended along the bank of the river, and led to the tree by which I stood.

20 And I also beheld a strait and narrow path, which came along by the rod of iron, even to the tree by which I stood; and it also led by the head of the fountain, unto a large and spacious field, as if it had been a world.

21 And I saw numberless concourses of people, many of whom were pressing forward, that they might obtain the path which led unto the tree by which I stood.

22 And it came to pass that they did come forth, and commence in the path which led to the tree.

23 And it came to pass that there arose a mist of darkness; yea, even an exceedingly great mist of darkness, insomuch that they who had commenced in the path did lose their way, that they wandered off and were lost.

What hindered the people from following the path?

(mists of darkness)

What do the mists of darkness represent?

(temptations)

1 Nephi 12:17

And the mists of darkness are the temptations of the devil, which blindeth the eyes, and hardeneth the hearts of the children of men, and leadeth them away into broad roads, that they perish and are lost.

What effect do these temptations have on those in the path?

(blindeth the eyes [deceived], and hardeneth the hearts [not receptive to word]
they wandered off and were lost)

What gets us through the mists of darkness? In other words, What keeps us from being deceived and keeps our hearts receptive to faith and hope?

(rod of iron)

What does the rod of iron represent?

(the word of God)

Ezra Taft Benson

“Success in righteousness, the power to avoid deception and resist temptation, guidance in our daily lives, healing of the soul—these are but a few of the promises the Lord has given to those who will come to His word. Does the Lord promise and not fulfill? Surely if He tells us that these things will come to us if we lay hold upon His word, the blessings can be ours.... Certain blessings are to be found only in the scriptures, only in coming to the word of the Lord and holding fast to it as we make our way through the mists of darkness to the tree of life.” (CR, April 1986)

Next we see a representation of the seed landing in stony places - those who receive the gospel but not with the depth needed to withstand difficulties

1Ne 8:24-28

24 And it came to pass that I beheld others pressing forward, and they came forth and caught hold of the end of the rod of iron; and they did press forward through the mist of darkness, clinging to the rod of iron, even until they did come forth and partake of the fruit of the tree.

25 And after they had partaken of the fruit of the tree they did cast their eyes about as if they were ashamed.

26 And I also cast my eyes round about, and beheld, on the other side of the river of water, a great and spacious building; and it stood as it were in the air, high above the earth.

27 And it was filled with people, both old and young, both male and female; and their manner of dress was exceedingly fine; and they were in the attitude of mocking and pointing their fingers towards those who had come at and were partaking of the fruit.

28 And after they had tasted of the fruit they were ashamed, because of those that were scoffing at them; and they fell away into forbidden paths and were lost.

What do we know about the “great and spacious building” and those who are in it?

Harold B. Lee

“Those, as seen in the vision, who were across the river pointing fingers of scorn represented the multitudes of the earth which are gathered together to fight against the apostles of the Lamb of God. The scorners, so the Lord revealed, represented the so-called wisdom of the world, and the building itself in which they were gathered was the ‘pride of the world.’” (CR, April 1971)

What do you think caused some of those who had tasted of the goodness of God’s love to turn away from it?

(they were ashamed, because of those that were scoffing at them)

Delbert L. Stapley

"The great and spacious building in addition to representing the pride and vain imaginations of men, stands for the mockery and ridicule of the world. Our generation should be reminded that scoffers are far from the kingdom of God. Those who allow the ridicule of men to make them embarrassed by the cause, the standards, or the obligations that they have espoused as true followers of Christ, and are turned thereby from the straight and narrow path of truth and righteousness, are those who form the stony ground in which the seed sown soon withers and dies." (CR, April 1966)

Quentin L. Cook

"Lehi explains some of the conduct that destroys faith. Some are proud, vain, and foolish. They are interested only in the so-called wisdom of the world. Others have some interest in God but are lost in worldly mists of darkness and sin. Some have tasted of the love of God and His word but feel ashamed because of those mocking them and fall away into 'forbidden paths.'" (CR, April 2012)

Next we see a representation of the seed landing among thorns - those who have no interest in the gospel because it is in opposition with their love of the world.

1Ne 8:31-34

31 And he also saw other multitudes feeling their way towards that great and spacious building.

32 And it came to pass that many were drowned in the depths of the fountain; and many were lost from his view, wandering in strange roads.

33 And great was the multitude that did enter into that strange building. And after they did enter into that building they did point the finger of scorn at me and those that were partaking of the fruit also; but we heeded them not.

34 These are the words of my father: For as many as heeded them, had fallen away.

What do you think that those who have no interest in the gospel seek after instead?

(feeling their way towards that great and spacious building
drowned in the depths of the fountain
wandering in strange roads)

Delbert L. Stapley

"Those who are drowned in the depths of the fountain refer to those who are engulfed in the quagmire of evil-mindedness, sin, and corruption; therefore, the wicked sink to destruction in the river of filth, and the depths thereof are the depths of hell." (CR, April 1966)

Ezra Taft Benson

"The prophet Lehi... saw some fall away 'in forbidden paths,' others drown in rivers of filthiness, and still others wander in 'strange roads.' When we read of the spreading curse of drugs, or read of the pernicious flood of pornography and immorality, do any of us doubt that these are the forbidden paths and rivers of filthiness Lehi described?" (CR, April 1986)

We should strive to be 'good ground' for the gospel seed - those who, 'heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit.' The steps to do this are outlined in Lehi's vision:

Commence on the path,
Cling to the rod of iron,
Continue on the path,
And after we have been born of God and tasted of his love we must endure persecutions and afflictions.

Delbert L. Stapley

"Passing through the mist and clinging steadfastly to the iron rod, the faithful pass triumphantly through the temptations that beset man's mortal pilgrimage to the cherished goal of eternal life with God.

"In man's search for happiness and his climb to eternal joy, there can be no relaxation, no deviation from the straight and narrow path; nor can he lose a firm hold upon the iron rod, which is the word of God. He must set aside the things of the world as he travels the path which leads to exaltation and glory in the kingdom of God." (CR, April 1966)

The Family of Ishmael

1Ne 7:2,5-12

[2] And it came to pass that the Lord commanded him that I, Nephi, and my brethren, should again return unto the land of Jerusalem, and bring down Ishmael and his family into the wilderness.

[5] And it came to pass that the Lord did soften the heart of Ishmael, and also his household, insomuch that they took their journey with us down into the wilderness to the tent of our father.

[6] And it came to pass that as we journeyed in the wilderness, behold Laman and Lemuel, and two of the daughters of Ishmael, and the two sons of Ishmael and their families, did rebel against us; yea, against me, Nephi, and Sam, and their father, Ishmael, and his wife, and his three other daughters.

[7] And it came to pass in the which rebellion, they were desirous to return unto the land of Jerusalem.

[8] And now I, Nephi, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, therefore I spake unto them, saying, yea, even unto Laman and unto Lemuel: Behold ye are mine elder brethren, and how is it that ye are so hard in your hearts, and so blind in your minds, that ye have need that I, your younger brother, should speak unto you,

yea, and set an example for you?

[9] How is it that ye have not hearkened unto the word of the Lord?

[10] How is it that ye have forgotten that ye have seen an angel of the Lord?

[11] Yea, and how is it that ye have forgotten what great things the Lord hath done for us, in delivering us out of the hands of Laban, and also that we should obtain the record?

[12] Yea, and how is it that ye have forgotten that the Lord is able to do all things according to his will, for the children of men, if it so be that they exercise faith in him? Wherefore, let us be faithful to him.

Nephi asks his brothers:

How is it that ye are so hard in your hearts, and so blind in your minds?

How is it that ye have forgotten that ye have seen an angel?

How is it that ye have forgotten how we received the brass plates?

How is it that ye have forgotten that the Lord is able to do all things?

Common questions within the church about Laman and Lemuel.

Why do you think Laman and Lemuel were so wicked even after they had received such strong evidence of the power and goodness of God?

Rodney Turner

“In spite of all they were taught, Laman, the arch-villain, and his tag-along brother Lemuel emerge as fundamentally corrupt men. Their record was dismal: they were materialistic, faithless, disloyal, cowardly, complaining, cruel, lazy, untruthful, and, above all, they were would-be murderers of their own father and brother....

“Laman and Lemuel had seen an angel, had experienced the power of God, and had heard the voice of the Lord and received of his Spirit. Yet they plotted Nephi's murder on at least four occasions, and their father's at least once. Nephi accused Laman and Lemuel of being 'murderers in their hearts'. They were prepared to shed innocent blood.

“These were not ignorant men; they stood self-condemned. When literally shocked by the Spirit, they testified: 'We know of a surety that the Lord is with thee, for we know that it is the power of the Lord that has shaken us.'”
(First Nephi: The Doctrinal Foundation, pg. 82-83)

According to verse 6, how many children did Ishmael have?

Ishmael has seven children, two sons and five daughters

There were five young men in Lehi's party (his sons plus Zoram). Each of them marry a daughter of Ishmael (1Ne 16:7).

It seems that Ishmael's sons were married and maybe had children -"and the

two sons of Ishmael and their families" (1Ne 7:6). It is possible that a daughter of Lehi was already married to a son of Ishmael. That may have been a reason for selecting Ishmael's family.

Lehi had more than one daughter (2Ne 5:6 "my sisters"). But it is not clear if they were born in Jerusalem or in the wilderness. If they were born in the wilderness they could have married the sons of Zoram or the sons of the sons of Ishmael

Lehi had two sons (Jacob and Joseph) born in the wilderness. They could have married the daughters of Zoram or the daughters of the sons of Ishmael.

Lehi was from the tribe of Manasseh and Ishmael from Ephraim

Erastus Snow

"The Prophet Joseph Smith informed us that the record of Lehi was contained on the one hundred sixteen pages that were first translated and subsequently stolen.... [Lehi] being of the lineage of Manasseh; but that Ishmael was of the lineage of Ephraim, and that his sons married into Lehi's family, and Lehi's sons married Ishmael's daughters." (JD, 23:184-5)