

1 Nephi 7:8-15 – How Is it that Ye Have Forgotten?

Nephi's opening salvo – that the younger brother should need to reprove the older brothers – may seem to be somewhat manipulative. Indeed, looking forward to 2 Nephi 4 it is possible that this is one of those times that Nephi “angered ... because of [his] enemies”¹. Still, Laman and Lemuel had had as much opportunity for learning as Nephi had, and they should have known without being reminded about the importance of obeying the Lord.

Five times in verses 8-12 Nephi asks “How is it?” The implication is that there are things that are so clear that it is foolishness not to heed them. They had seen an angel, they had been delivered, they knew that the Lord was watching over them, and his interest in them was personal, compelling, and for their benefit.

President Eyring in the October 2007 General Conference talks about how it is possible for us to forget the great things the Lord has done for us. We may not have seen an angel nor been saved from Laban, but the evidences of the Lord's love for us is all around us if we choose to pay attention. Our very existence in mortality is a blessing from God. If we have the everlasting gospel in our lives it is only because of divine intervention. These are evidences that, like the examples Nephi cites, should make evident to us the interest and love of the Lord. How is it, then, that we can fail to hearken unto the word of the Lord?

The answer for us is much the same as the answer for Laman and Lemuel. We observe the great city of Jerusalem, and the neighbors who are not very concerned about the Lord yet seem pretty happy, and we think that there must be some happiness in the world that the Lord is keeping from us. In spite of all logic we yield to the reasoning that there are easier ways to happiness than what the Lord has given us.

Like Laman and Lemuel, we have that choice. We can go the way of the world. If we do so, however, our fate will be the same of which Nephi warned his brothers. We will perish. It may not be by the Babylonians, and it may not be the physical death that awaited all those at Jerusalem, but the spiritual peril is just as great.

God loves us, and his commandments are the easiest, and indeed the only, path to eternal happiness. Let us not forget that.

¹ 2 Nephi 4:29