

Come Follow Me Podcast  
Elo Viz production  
Week 3  
1 Nephi 6-10

This week we hit the motherload of symbolism. Chapter eight is Lehi's vision of the Tree of Life. Then next week we get to study Nephi's interpretation of Lehi's vision. It's going to be an awesome two weeks.

Before we jump into this vision there is something that I would like to point out. Usually when we talk about Adam and Eve and their transgression which led them to being cast out of the Garden of Eden, we talk about the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil. Which is the fruit of the tree that they partook of which God forbade them to eat. But listen to this verse in Genesis 2 “9 And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.” (Genesis 2:9)

Then this verse is chapter 3

“24 So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.” (Genesis 3:24)

For the longest time I thought that when they were cast out God put Cherubim and a flaming sword over the tree of knowledge of good and evil. But there were two very important trees in the garden of Eden. The tree of knowledge of Good and evil which they were forbidden to partake and also the tree of Life. Which it doesn't say they were not allowed to partake of. In fact they could partake of every tree of the garden except just the one: the tree of knowledge of good and evil. That would lead us to assume that they were able to and did partake of the Tree of Life. At least until they transgressed the law and then they lost access to the Tree of Life.

Now, the reason I bring this up is because in Lehi's vision we also see the Tree of Life. Is it the same tree? I don't know. I guess it could be, or it very well could be a different tree of Life. But if we ponder on these questions it may open to us additional insight to this vision that we are so blessed to have a record of.

To keep with the theme this year of personal revelation let just point out quickly that this would be the ultimate goal and dream. To have a vision as an answer to a prayer. The miraculous tender mercy of God to give such an amazing insight to a flawed mortal man. I am emphasizing that flawed mortal part because after this vision in chapter 16 Lehi murmurs against God for his trials. His complaining to God comes after this vision which means that Lehi had still not been totally faithful in this journey so far. He was still learning and growing and struggling with the things of the world. And if God in his mercy would give a great vision like this to Lehi then He certainly would give one to one as righteous as you.

So, it starts off with this angel that comes and stands before him and bades Lehi to follow him. For several hours they walk in this dark and dreary waste land. Then Lehi gets this great idea to pray because so far he is not enjoying this dream, I bet he was thinking that this was more like a nightmare, with all the walking in darkness. After he prays, suddenly he finds himself in a large and spacious field with a tree in the distance. He walks over to investigate the tree and finds that it is wonderful! "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." (1 Nephi 8:11)

This is what Nephi says about this fruit:

"Yea, it is the **love** of God, which **sheddeth** itself abroad in the hearts of the children of men; wherefore, it is the **most** desirable above all things.

**23** And he [the angel] spake unto me, saying: Yea, and the most **joyous** to the soul."  
(1 Nephi 11:22-23)

No wonder that Lehi has a burning desire to share it with his family. We do the same thing. Do you ever go out to a new restaurant with friends or family and you try something new for the first time, and it surprises you how good it is that you turn to everyone at the table and what do you say? Guys... you have to try this.... This is soooo Good!

This is exactly what Lehi was experiencing. But this is literally the best thing that anyone could ever taste in their entire life. There is nothing that compares to the joy and sweetness that comes from experiencing the Love of Jesus Christ. And once you truly taste of this fruit you can't help but desire that everyone you love has the opportunity to try it as well.

Here are some interesting points to this vision that I hope will cause you to ponder this week. First- Why is Jesus a tree? Trees do not move or change location; they are born and die in the same place. Why, in this parable or vision of life is Jesus represented as a tree?

Second- Look at all the different journeys that people are taken on.

- A numberless concourses of people were pressing forward on the straight and narrow path but as soon as the mist of darkness arose they wandered off and were lost. (1 Nephi 8:21-23)
- There were some that pressed forward as they caught hold of the end of the rod, these were making their way as they were clinging to the rod. But after they made it to the tree and partook of the fruit they were ashamed and fell away into forbidden paths. (1 Nephi 8:24-28)
- There were some that didn't even try to partake but appeared in a great and spacious building who mocked those that went to the tree. (1 Nephi 8:26-27)
- Another group I find interesting in its description. It says: "**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.” (1 Nephi 8:31-32)

- The last group it identifies are those that pressed their way to the tree “Continually holding fast to the rod of iron until they came to the tree and “fell down” to partake of the fruit. (1 Nephi 8:30)

I love the imagery we see as these faithful people fall at the foot of the tree to partake of its goodness. Most who partake of fruit that is produced by a tree literally reach up to partake. But, not in this case. In order to taste of the greatest fruit in the whole world, one must fall. Fall on your face at the feet of Christ to taste this fruit. This image is given to show us that only those that are truly humble and penitent will be able to have this experience.

The end of the vision I find very interesting. Listen carefully at the last verse of this vision: “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 [Lehi] and those that were partaking of the fruit also; And there came down a pillar of fire from heaven and destroyed all those that did not partake of the fruit..... Actually that last part is not what it says. Though that is what we imagine in our minds as we read this vision. This is what it actually says: they did point the finger of scorn at me [Lehi] and those that were partaking of the fruit also; but we heeded them not.” (1 Nephi 8:33)

That's it. No fire from heaven, no condemnation, no Hell or judgment. Well, why not? If we are on the path and we do all the work to get to the tree. And we miss out on the party in the building or the swimming in the river. Don't we get to see all the others destroyed and in the end we win? If this is what you are thinking about while you read this vision then I can assure you that you are missing the whole point of the vision. This is not a story about right and wrong, good and evil. This is a story about different paths. And in the end they all lead back to Christ. Even those drowned in the river, Jesus was there to lift them out and raise them from the dead. And those that were lost in the midst of darkness. Don't worry, Jesus left the ninety and nine and He went after them in the darkness. He gave them a light to follow and He brings them back. But what about those that mocked us from the great and spacious building? Didn't Nephi tell us that it was destroyed and everyone in it? Not quite how it goes. In 1st Nephi Chapter 11 when Nephi sees that expanded version of this vision this is how he describes it's destruction: “And it came to pass that I saw and bear record, that the great and spacious building was the pride of the world; and it fell, and the fall thereof was exceedingly great.” (1 Nephi 11:36)

See, it is not the people that were destroyed, it was the building which was the pride of the world. And what happens when we lose our pride? When we humble ourselves or even when we are compelled to be humble? We are still led back to the presents of the Savior who is standing with open arms, ready and willing to forgive and offer us His ever merciful fruit, which is still sweet and pure and white.

Nephi himself said : “And now I, Nephi, do not speak [all](#) the words of my father.”  
(1 Nephi 8:29)

I think that if we have the chance to see the end of the story, the conclusion of the vision then this would have a very happy ending. It is important to remember that those that were drowned or that fell away or even those that mocked us from their towers are all beloved children of our Heavenly Father. They are someone's brother or sister, someone's daughter or son. They are loved and cherished and longed for by someone that has fallen at the feet of the Savior and partaken of the marvelous healing fruit of His love. And once we have been there and experienced that, then there is nothing that could stop us from trying with all we have and all we are, until the end of the world, to offer again and again to those we love the amazing fruit of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We will not rest or become discouraged until all of God's children have partaken and had the chance to know as we know, to feel as we feel, to see as we see, the wondrously joyful peace that comes from the Loving Redeemer of all Mankind, even Jesus Christ. In his name we pray, Amen.