

Come Follow Me Podcast  
Elo Viz Production  
Week 47  
Ether 6-11

We see some similarities and differences in the Nephites crossing the ocean and also the Jaredites crossing the same ocean. Both groups were prepared and both groups had a mission to remember the Lord as they were blessed to live in the promised land. How they got there was very different. The Nephites built a boat and the Jaredites were in barges. Have you ever wondered why God didn't do it the same way for both groups?

It is estimated that it took the Nephites about 5-6 months to cross the great waters, but the Jaredites, it took them 344 days, (Ether 6:11) nearly a year to get across the ocean. Some might think that God became more knowledgeable the second time with the Nephites. I don't believe that for one second.

On my mission I had a mission companion that told me this story:

He was fairly fresh on the mission. It was his first area and he was very green. They had an investigator, (That's what they called them back then) An elderly lady that they were teaching about every other night. She could only meet in the late evenings and they found that their discussions or visits were running late, so late that they would miss the tram home and would usually get home later than they were supposed to. It bugged him because he knew it was important to keep the mission rules in order to keep the Holy Spirit with him. So for several weeks they worked really hard to get through the discussion with this investigator in order to catch their tram and get home on time. One particular evening they just barely missed the tram and had to wait 30 minutes until the next one would show up. This was devastating to them as they made a promise to God to keep the mission rules exactly. It was about a 15 minute walk to their apartment once they got off the tram. Once they got on the tram they began to pray: Father, we really want to keep the mission rules and that means getting home on time. We know that this is important to You and also to us. When we get off we are going to run as fast as we can to the apartment, but we know we will still not make it on time. Please be with us and give us strength to run faster, so that we may get home quickly. They both had great faith, as they came to their stop they took off in a dead sprint, knowing God would help them. They looked at their watch and it was 2 minutes till 9, and 2 miles to the apartment. Even if they were in a car they would not make it. But they ran anyway. They put their heads down and ran as fast as they possibly could. He told me that the craziest thing happened next. He said that it was as if they were teleported to the doorstep of their apartment. In an instant they were within feet of their front door. They looked at their watch again. It was exactly 9pm. A miracle! He said that he knew God was with them and helped them get there in a non-earthly way, light a flash of light.

I have pondered often about this experience and especially when I read stories like the Nephites and the Jaredites, even about Moses and the Children of Israel. Did you know that it should have only taken Moses and the children of Israel less than 2 weeks to get to the promised land, but instead it took them 40 years.

Why is that? Why is it that some receive answers to their prayers instantly and others it takes a lifetime to receive an answer? Why did it take the Jaredites 344 days? And why does it seem like sometimes God is slow to grant those blessings that we seek?

Well, let's talk about it. I believe there are some principles attached to this subject that are worth considering.

First off in Doctrine and Covenants 130 verses 20 and 21 we read:

**20** There is a **law**, irrevocably decreed in **heaven** before the foundations of this world, upon which all **blessings** are predicated—

**21** And when we obtain any **blessing** from God, it is by **obedience** to that law upon which it is predicated.

For most of us today we live in a very self centered world. A world of instant gratifications. But, when we find that we are not able to obtain something on our own, then, and only then we find that we need to reach out to God for help. Therein lies the problem. We have been so focused inward for such a long time that now when things get hard we turn outward to God and expect an answer or a resolve instantly. If you had a child that did that, how would you respond? There is a law irrevocably decreed in heaven. That if we want to obtain ANY blessing we must first obey that law upon which that blessing is predicated. And if we live a life of take, take, take: then the heavens can not give, give, give because it is opposite to the laws of heaven.

Doctrine and Covenants, section 101 verse 7 reads:

**7** They were slow to **hearken** unto the voice of the Lord their God; therefore, the Lord their God is slow to hearken unto their prayers, to answer them in the day of their trouble.

Another reason why we may not be receiving the blessings from heaven that we are seeking is related to a parable that the Savior told during His earthly ministry. It is in Matthew 20 where the master of the Vineyard went out early to hire laborers. Then in the third hour he hired more laborers then again in the sixth and the ninth hour and hired more, and lastly in the eleventh hour he hired more laborers. Then at the end of the day He paid them all the same wage. I know that this might come as a shock to you but you are not the laborers that were hired in the eleventh hour. Possibly not even the ones that were hired in the ninth hour. That means that the labor is not over. We still have work to do. Perhaps the reason that you have not received the blessing you seek is because the work day is not over. It would be silly if you asked your employer to pay you for the work day before you finished your work, right? So it is with God. He has asked us to do our work and He has promised that He will be fair and generous to us. So, Keep working, keep doing His will and you will be rewarded.

And lastly: Timing! Timing may be the reason that you have not received the blessing that you are seeking. There is a famous Christian song by TobyMac called "Help is on the way".

His inspired lyrics teach us that God is never early to respond to our prayers but that He is also never late to respond to our prayers.

We had this experience a bit ago. We are moving and in need to sell or rent our old home. We were a few months away still, but we met this really nice couple that was going to do a lease to own option with our house. It seemed perfect. All except one thing. There was this nagging thought I kept having that it wasn't time. We were still a few months away from needing someone to move into our old house and this was way too early. From every thing I have ever learned God is always right on time. But I figured, hey, this may be different. I was horribly wrong. Right as we were about to sign a lease agreement with this couple she lost her job and they were not able to afford the payment and had to back out. It's funny because I wasn't upset at all. I knew it wasn't the right time. Even though it seemed like it. We can always count on God being never early, but also never late.

And that is the most important part. He is never late. No matter what you can count on Him showing up. There is a famous scripture in Psalms 23. It is probably the most quoted scripture ever. Listen to the closing lines of this psalm:

- 1 The LORD *is* my shepherd; I shall not want.
- 2 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.
- 3 He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
- 4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.
- 5 Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.
- 6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

In light of what we have been discussing I hope you can see why people quote this scripture all the time, especially in times of hardship. They are reminding themselves that He is there, watching, preparing, fixing all the things for your good.

Have faith, be strong and patient. And you will be amazed at the plan He has for you.

In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.