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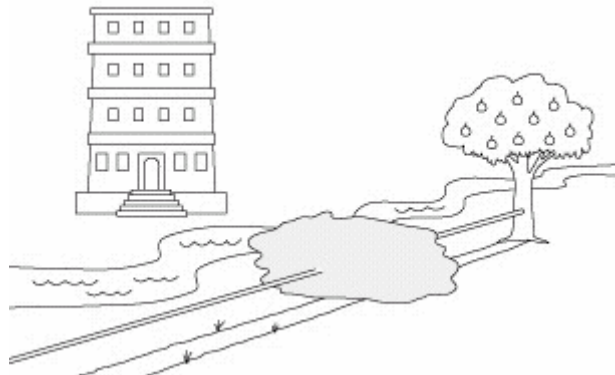
Next Weeks Lesson: Lesson 4 "The Things Which I Saw While I Was Carried Away in the Spirit" ([1 Nephi 12-14](#))

Today's Lesson: Lesson 3 "The Vision of the Tree of Life" ([1 Nephi 8-11](#); [1 Nephi 12:16-18](#); [1 Nephi 15](#))

- A. \_\_\_\_\_
- B. \_\_\_\_\_
- C. \_\_\_\_\_
- D. \_\_\_\_\_

### 1. The symbols in the vision of the tree of life.

Lehi received a vision and told his family about it ([1 Nephi 8:2](#)). After Nephi heard his father speak about the things in the vision, he also wanted to "see, and hear, and know of [those] things" ([1 Nephi 10:17](#); see also the [first additional teaching idea](#)). Because of Nephi's belief in Jesus Christ, his request was granted ([1 Nephi 11:6](#)). It is through Nephi's record of his experience that we know the interpretation of the vision.



### *The tree of life and its fruit* ([1 Nephi 8:2-10](#))

- A. When Nephi was shown the tree of life, he asked to know its interpretation ([1 Nephi 11:8-11](#)). What did he learn that the tree represents? (See [1 Nephi 11:21-25](#).) What did Nephi see that helped him better understand God's love? (See [1 Nephi 11:13-21](#), [1 Nephi 11:24](#), [1 Nephi 11:26-33](#). He saw the birth, ministry, and Atonement of Jesus Christ.)

Read [John 3:16](#). Heavenly Father showed the depth of His love for us when He "gave his only begotten Son." The Atonement is evidence of Jesus Christ's great love for us.

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland taught that the tree of life is a symbol of Jesus Christ. He said: “The images of Christ and the tree [are] inextricably linked. ... At the very outset of the Book of Mormon, ... Christ is portrayed as the source of eternal life and joy, the living evidence of divine love, and the means whereby God will fulfill his covenant with the house of Israel and indeed the entire family of man, returning them all to their eternal promises” (*Christ and the New Covenant* [1997], 160, 162).

- B. What influence does the love of God have in our lives? How can we more fully recognize God’s love for us?
- C. What did the fruit of the tree represent? (See [1 Nephi 15:36](#); [D&C 14:7](#).)
- D. How did Lehi and Nephi describe the tree of life and its fruit?
  - (1) “Most sweet, above all that I ever before tasted” ([1 Nephi 8:11](#))
  - (2) “White, to exceed all ... whiteness” ([1 Nephi 8:11](#); see also [1 Nephi 11:8](#))
  - (3) “Desirable above all other fruit” ([1 Nephi 8:12](#); see also [1 Nephi 15:36](#))
  - (4) Having “beauty ... exceeding of all beauty” ([1 Nephi 11:8](#))
  - (5) “Precious above all”; “most precious” ([1 Nephi 11:9](#); [1 Nephi 15:36](#))
  - (6) “Most joyous to the soul” ([1 Nephi 11:23](#); see also [1 Nephi 8:10](#))
  - (7) “The greatest of all the gifts of God” ([1 Nephi 15:36](#))

Eternal life is the “most sweet” and “most precious” blessing we can receive. Because of God’s love for us, this blessing is available to us through the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

- E. In the vision, what did Lehi desire once he had partaken of the fruit of the tree? (See [1 Nephi 8:12](#).) How can we help our loved ones draw nearer to the Savior and receive the promise of eternal life?

### ***The rod of iron*** ([1 Nephi 8:19-20](#))

- F. What did the rod of iron represent? (See [1 Nephi 11:25](#); [1 Nephi 15:23-24](#).) Where can we find the word of God? (In the scriptures, the teachings of latter-day prophets, and the promptings of the Holy Ghost.) How does the word of God help us come unto Christ? How does it keep us on the path to eternal life?

### ***The river of filthy water, the mist of darkness, and the great and spacious building*** ([1 Nephi 8:13](#), [1 Nephi 8:23](#), [1 Nephi 8:26-27](#))

- G. What did the river of filthy water represent? (See [1 Nephi 12:16](#); [1 Nephi 15:26-29](#).)
- H. What did the mist of darkness represent? (See [1 Nephi 12:17](#).) What are the effects of the mist of darkness? (See [1 Nephi 8:23](#); [1 Nephi 12:17](#).) Why might

Satan want our eyes to be blinded to the love of God? to the Atonement of Jesus Christ? to the word of God? In what ways does Satan try to blind our eyes?

- I. The rod of iron “extended along the bank of the river” ([1 Nephi 8:19](#)), serving as a protection between the strait and narrow path and the filthy water. It also gave the people in the vision something to cling to when they were in the mist of darkness ([1 Nephi 8:24](#), [1 Nephi 8:30](#)). What does this teach about how the word of God can help us?
- J. What did the great and spacious building represent? (See [1 Nephi 11:34-36](#); [1 Nephi 12:18](#).) Why is it significant that the building “stood ... in the air”? (See [1 Nephi 8:26](#). Note that the building did not have a solid foundation.) How can pride keep a person from receiving eternal life?
- K. Some people in the vision tasted of the fruit but were ashamed because the people in the great and spacious building mocked them ([1 Nephi 8:26-28](#)). How can we receive strength to withstand persecution?

## 2. The people in the vision of the tree of life.

- A. In the vision, Lehi saw “numberless concourses of people” ([1 Nephi 8:21](#)). These people can be divided into four categories based on their actions in seeking the tree and the fruit.
  - (1) [1 Nephi 8:21-23](#). (Those who start on the path but then become lost in the mist of darkness.)
  - (2) [1 Nephi 8:24-28](#). (Those who hold to the rod of iron until they reach the tree and partake of the fruit, but then become ashamed and fall away.)
  - (3) [1 Nephi 8:30](#). (Those who hold to the rod of iron until they reach the tree and partake of the fruit, and who then remain faithful.)
  - (4) [1 Nephi 8:31-33](#). (Those who never start on the path but instead go directly toward the great and spacious building.)
- B. How are these categories manifest in the world today? (For example, people who say that they want eternal life but are distracted by other things, such as material wealth or worldly pleasures, are like those who start on the path but then become lost.)
- C. In the vision, what kinds of roads did people travel when they let go of the iron rod or left the tree of life? (See [1 Nephi 8:28](#), [1 Nephi 8:32](#); [1 Nephi 12:17](#).) What happens to those who follow such roads? If we are moving toward “forbidden,” “strange,” or “broad” roads, how can we return to the strait and narrow path?
- D. What are some things we must do to stay on the strait and narrow path? How can we help others stay on the path?

Mark the following words in your scriptures: *commence* ([1 Nephi 8:22](#)), *caught hold* ([1 Nephi 8:24](#)), *clinging* ([1 Nephi 8:24](#)), and *continually* ([1 Nephi 8:30](#)).

These words help us understand what we must do to reach the tree of life: we must commence in the strait and narrow path, catch hold of the rod of iron and cling to it, and continue moving toward the tree.

**3. “He that diligently seeketh shall find” ([1 Nephi 10:19](#))**

- A. What did Nephi desire after he heard about his father’s vision? (See [1 Nephi 10:17](#).) What did he do to have this desire fulfilled? (See [1 Nephi 10:17-19](#); [1 Nephi 11:1-6](#).) How can Nephi’s example help us as we seek to understand gospel truths?
- B. In what ways did Laman and Lemuel’s response to their father’s vision differ from Nephi’s response? (See [1 Nephi 15:1-2](#).) Why were Laman and Lemuel unable to understand the truths Lehi had taught them? (See [1 Nephi 15:3](#), [1 Nephi 15:8-11](#).)

**4. “Knowest thou the condescension of God?” ([1 Nephi 11:16](#))**

- A. What does the phrase “condescension of God” ([1 Nephi 11:16](#), [1 Nephi 11:26](#)) mean. In this phrase the word *condescension* means coming down voluntarily to a lower level. Elder Bruce R. McConkie said:

“The condescension of God (meaning the Father) consists in the fact that ... he became the personal and literal Father of a mortal Offspring born of mortal woman. And the condescension of God (meaning the Son) consists in the fact that ... he [Jesus Christ] submitted to all the trials of mortality, suffering ‘temptations, and pain of body, hunger, thirst, and fatigue, even more than man can suffer, except it be unto death’ ([Mosiah 3:5-8](#)), finally being put to death in a most ignominious manner” (*Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. [1966], 155).

**5. “And they were in the attitude of mocking” ([1 Nephi 8:27](#))**

- A. The people in the building had an “attitude of mocking.” This mocking led some who had partaken of the fruit to be ashamed and fall away ([1 Nephi 8:27-28](#)).
- B. In what ways might our attitudes toward others lead them to fall away?

Accountable individuals are responsible for their own actions; however, our attitude toward others can either strengthen them in their righteous efforts or discourage them. Let’s strive to strengthen each other and to never mock or belittle others.