

NEPHI THE HUNTER

(1 Nephi 5:16-41)

V16-41 The party travels on the wilderness and pause at a place called Shazer in order to restock their food supplies (v. 16). They do so, return to camp, and then resume the journey keeping along the Red Sea in the more fertile areas (v. 17-18). They continue on for some time in this manner traveling with pauses for hunting forays (v. 19) following the direction on the curious ball (v. 20).

However, on one of the hunting trips (v. 21), Nephi's bow, the most powerful among the hunters, breaks resulting in them obtaining no game. Nephi's brothers are angry with him over it (v. 22), and they are forced to return to camp empty handed to face their hungry families (v. 23). Upon returning to camp, Nephi's brothers and the sons of Ishmael take to complaining and drag the rest of the group down with it, so much so that even Lehi complains against the Lord for the seeming lapse of providence (v. 24-25). Nephi becomes the object of derision because of the loss of his bow (v. 26) and he ends up turning on his brothers and censuring them for their complaining against the Lord (v. 27). His being the scapegoat for their problems motivates him to make a new bow and arrow and take his sling and stones to fix the problem. Rather than censuring his father, as he did his brothers, he approaches his father, who possesses the curious ball and asks him where he should go to find food (v. 28-29).

With the acrimony in the camp having subsided with Nephi's admonitions, his father goes and inquires of the Lord (v. 30) and ends up getting chastised sorely (v. 31). The Lord instructs Lehi to take a closer look at the brass ball to see what is written on it (v. 32). When Lehi and the others read what is written upon it they are filled with the fear of God (v. 33). Nephi realizes the pointers in the brass ball operate based upon the faith and diligence with which they are used (v. 34). The writing upon the brass ball is changed from time to time, according to the how closely people adhere to its admonitions, in order to educate them according to the will of the Lord (v. 35-36). The brass ball gives Nephi directions where he will find food (v. 37), so he follows them and obtains food (v. 38), resulting in the camp humbling itself before the Lord and giving thanks to Him (v. 39).

V33 The verse says there are things written upon the brass ball that strike fear into the hearts of those who read it. However, it doesn't tell what was written on it. I would assume the gist of what was written is contained in v. 28-29. If this is the case then the fear the people have is that of being lost in the wilderness with no compass to direct them.

If the second spindle points in the direction of food (see v. 30) then the complaining against the Lord would have been particularly ironic. There they were complaining the Lord had failed to provide for them when there was the curious brass ball pointing at where food was located, only they were too hard-hearted to pay attention to it.

V37 The direction Nephi should travel to find food is somehow given on the brass ball. One of the spindles is said to give the direction, which they should travel in v. 11. Here, we probably have the purpose of the second spindle, to give the direction of food.

- 1. Why were Nephi and his brothers hungry?**
- 2. What did Nephi do?**
- 3. Who did Nephi and his father ask to find out where food was?**
- 4. Why did Nephi ask his father first?**
- 5. Should we ask our father questions before we take them to the Lord? Why?**