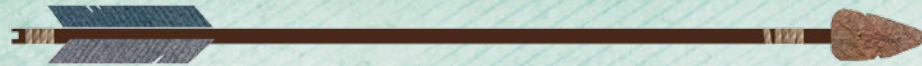


Nephi's Bows

NEPHI'S STEEL BOW

Type of bow: We can't be sure, but Nephi tells us that it was "made of fine steel" (1 Nephi 16:18). This mention of metal as part of the bow's construction implies that it was strong and probably had a good draw weight (the energy built up when the arrow is drawn back) and thus a good range and force for each shot.

Why it broke: Again, we can't be sure, but increased heat and changed humidity (going from Jerusalem to the southwestern Arabian Peninsula) may have weakened the bow. This may also explain why Laman and Lemuel's bows "lost their springs" (1 Nephi 16:21).

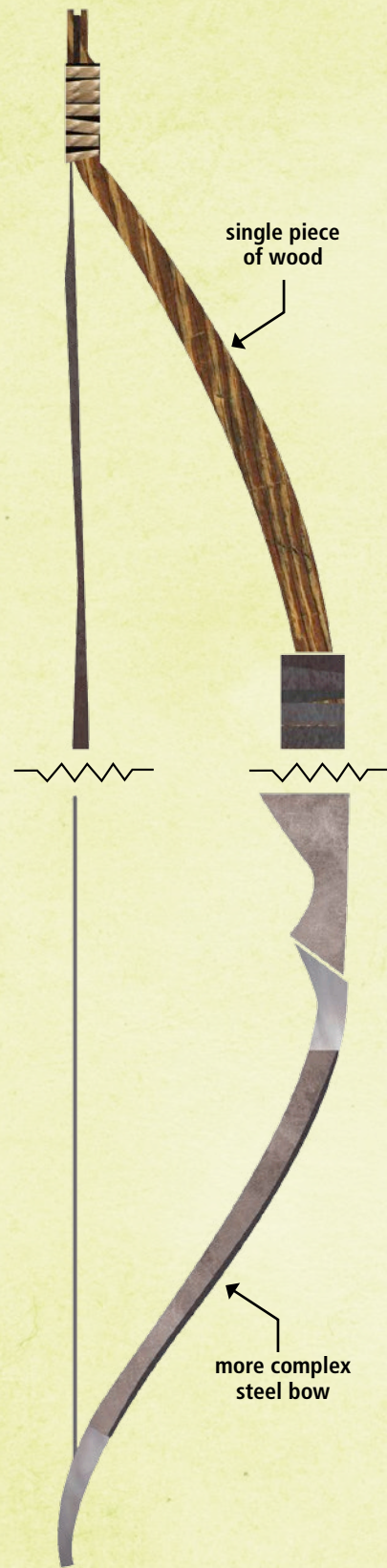


WHAT THEY WERE HUNTING

Some larger animals found in the southwestern Arabian Peninsula that Nephi and his brothers could have hunted include the nubian ibex (a kind of goat), oryx (a kind of antelope), and mountain gazelle. Several smaller animals also inhabit the area.

WHAT ABOUT THE ARROW?

Nephi's new bow was probably a different size (most likely longer) and had a different draw weight (probably weaker) than his first one. This may have required making a new, customized arrow so that it would fly straight and far. And, by the way, it says he made "an arrow" (1 Nephi 16:23). Just one? Now *that's* faith.



NEPHI'S BOW OF WOOD

Type of bow: Nephi says he "did make out of wood a bow" (1 Nephi 16:23). A bow made of a single piece of wood is called a self bow.

How it was made: Nephi would have had to carve a piece of wood long enough, thick enough, straight enough, and flexible yet strong enough to draw back with great force without breaking it. Suitable wood in the area may have included olive, pomegranate, acacia, or juniper.

How it compared to the first bow: Bows made only of wood are generally weaker than those that combine various materials, having less range and force. So Nephi may have had to work harder to hunt the animals.

"AND IT CAME TO PASS THAT I, NEPHI, DID MAKE OUT OF WOOD A BOW, AND OUT OF A STRAIGHT STICK, AN ARROW. . . . AND I SAID UNTO MY FATHER: WHITHER SHALL I GO TO OBTAIN FOOD?" 1 NEPHI 16:23

WHERE THIS HAPPENED



From Jerusalem, Lehi's family traveled to "the borders near the shore of the Red Sea" (1 Nephi 2:5) and then went in "nearly a south-southeast direction, . . . keeping in the most fertile parts of the wilderness, which were in the borders near the Red Sea" (1 Nephi 16:13–14). This would place them somewhere in the rugged mountainous areas of the southwestern Arabian Peninsula.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY BETH JEPSON; TEXTURES FROM ISTOCKPHOTO/THINKSTOCK

The story of the weapon Nephi built in order to solve a problem may hold lessons for you.

WHAT WE CAN LEARN

It had to be made. Unlike the Liahona (see 1 Nephi 16:10), the new bow did not miraculously appear one morning. It took someone with learning, skill, ingenuity, and determination to make it. We should prepare ourselves to be the ones who can do what needs to be done.

It wouldn't have been easy to make or use. The problems we face aren't always easily solved. Doing hard things is part of life.

Nephi built it on his own initiative. Nephi chose to act. He did what he could to fix a bad situation. He didn't wait to be "compelled in all things" but decided to be "anxiously engaged" and do something "of [his] own free will" (D&C 58:26–27). The Lord then blessed his efforts by helping him have a successful hunt (see 1 Nephi 16:30–31).

Nephi built the bow while others complained (see 1 Nephi 16:18, 20, 22). Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said, "Speak encouragingly, including about yourself. Try not to complain and moan incessantly. . . . No misfortune is so bad that whining about it won't make it worse" ("The Tongue of Angels," *Ensign*, May 2007, 18).



MAKE THE EFFORT

"Have the determination to make the effort, the single-mindedness to work toward a worthy goal, and the courage not only to face the challenges that inevitably come but also to make a second effort, should such be required."

President Thomas S. Monson, "Living the Abundant Life," *Ensign*, Jan. 2012, 5.