



Type: Magazine Article

Book of Mormon Gems of Truth: Lesson 14

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Source: *Relief Society Magazine*, Vol. 39, No. 12 (December 1952), pp. 847-848

Published by: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Abstract: Monthly Book of Mormon lessons for adult women (Relief Society). Each month a verse of Book of Mormon scripture is presented with accompanying quotes from General Authorities and writers of the Church.

His brothers, Laman and Lemuel, were cursed with a dark skin for their iniquity. Their descendants became "an idle people, full of mischief and subtlety" (2 Nephi 5:24).

In his second book, Nephi summarizes what he attempted to accomplish among his people. He tried to persuade them to do good. He explained the history of their fathers, the tribes of Israel, and God's covenants with them. He spoke of Jesus who was to come to earth to save mankind and exhorted them to believe in him. He reproved the sins of the people and encouraged them to endure in faith to the end (2 Nephi 32:4).

Near the close of his writings Nephi reveals the great charity which was in his heart for all mankind and particularly for his people, when he wrote:

But I, Nephi, have written what I have written, and I esteem it as of great worth, and especially unto my people. For I pray continually for them by day, and mine eyes water my pillow by night because of them; and I cry unto my God in faith, and I know that he will hear my cry (2 Nephi 33:3).

Scholar, statesman, man of God—these are appellations that apply to this great character who was promised by the Lord that he should be a leader and a teacher of his brothers, which promises were literally fulfilled.

Questions on the Lesson

1. What are the two basic characteristics of Nephi? Justify your answer.
2. How did Nephi exemplify his forgiving nature?
3. Can you show that Nephi believed in the application of religious truths to life?
4. How do you know that Nephi was prayerful?

Visiting Teacher Messages

Book of Mormon Gems of Truth

Lesson 14—"Wherefore, the Lord God Gave Unto Man That He Should Act for Himself. Wherefore, Man Could Not Act for Himself Save It Should Be That He Was Enticed by the One Or the Other" (2 Nephi 2:16).

For Tuesday, March 3, 1953

Objective: To bring to our minds an awareness of the importance of free agency, and to stimulate its intelligent use.

PERHAPS never before in the history of the world has the free agency of man been so gravely threatened. Perhaps never before has the need been greater for an awakening, on the part of all mankind, to the worth of this principle.

The right to make our own decisions is one of the basic privileges

granted to man. It is God-given and an eternal principle. At the council in heaven Satan presented a plan for the redemption of man which would have denied him his agency. Our Heavenly Father disapproved that plan because it was not in accord with divine law. How we should cherish the principle of

free agency and jealously guard it against any designs which might wrest it from us! There are those in the world today who maintain that the common people are not capable of governing themselves or of making wise decisions, and who therefore would take away man's agency and presume to prescribe his way of life for him. And many seem willing to relinquish this precious right, believing their circumstances would be improved thereby.

Why is free agency so precious? Because only through the exercise of free agency can man develop and progress. Only by knowing good and evil and by choosing one or the other can man prove himself. No one can reach the exaltation which God has prepared for the righteous, and which is the purpose of his existence, by any other process than choosing the good and forsaking evil.

Often we bemoan the fact that so many obstacles are in our way, that we are beset on every hand by temptations. We chafe at the necessity of forever making choices, weighing the merits or demerits of innumerable matters. But let us remember that every choice that we make, offers an opportunity for growth.

In 2 Nephi 2:11, we read, "For it must needs be, that there is an opposition in all things." President Brigham Young said:

There is not, has not been, and never can be any method, scheme, or plan devised by any being in this world, for intelligence to exist eternally and obtain an exaltation, without knowing the good and the evil—without tasting the bitter and the sweet. Can the people understand that it is actually necessary for opposite principles to be placed before them, or this state of being would be no probation, and we should have no opportunity for exercising the agency given us? Can they understand that we cannot obtain eternal life unless we actually know and comprehend by our experience the principle of good and the principle of evil, the light and the darkness, truth, virtue, and holiness, also vice, wickedness, and corruption? (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, page 66, 1941 Edition).

Let us not look upon the problems and tribulations of life as a cruel fate dogging our footsteps, but rather as so many opportunities by which we may prove our integrity, a test by which we may gain entrance into the kingdom of our Father. "I have overcome the world," was the solemn declaration of the Savior, prior to his crucifixion. We too must overcome the world, if we would gain eternal life.

The Greater Gift

Margaret Evelyn Shingleton

In every heart the Christmas bell
Awakens answering chimes,
A peal of joy or a measured knell
For the death of happier times.

Is the gift more dear when the lonely sing
His birthday song again
To this Child for whom the carols ring,
This Holiest of Men?