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Characters and Teachings of the Book of Mormon: Lesson 6—Coriantumr and Ether

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Abstract: The objective of this lesson is to study the results of disobedience, and the necessity of exercising faith.



Theology—Characters and Teachings of The Book of Mormon

Lesson 6—Coriantumr and Ether

Elder Leland H. Monson

(Text: The Book of Mormon: Ether, chapters 12-15.)

For Tuesday, March 4, 1952

Objective: To study the results of disobedience, and the necessity of exercising faith.

Note to Class Leaders:

This lesson, as the preceding lesson, consists of two parts: first, a narration of the final period of the Jaredites; and second, other teachings of Moroni.

IN the days when Coriantumr was king over all the land, the Prophet Ether began to prophecy to the people "for he could not be restrained because of the Spirit of the Lord which was in him. For he did cry from the morning, even until the going down of the sun" (Ether 12:2, 3). He taught them that this land of promise was the place on which the New Jerusalem was to be built up unto the remnant of the seed of Joseph. And this land was to be the land of their inheritance.

Moroni, writing about the prophecies of Ether, records that they were great and marvelous. But the people would not listen to them. Finally, Ether "hid himself in the cavity of a rock by day, and by night he went forth viewing the things which should come upon the people" (Ether 13:13).

During the first year that he dwelt in the cavity of the rock, many people were slain by those who belonged to the secret combinations. They were fighting against Coriantumr for the kingdom. Coriantumr was skilled in the arts of war and in all the cunning of the world, but he was not righteous.

In the second year that Ether lived in the cavity of a rock, at the direction of the Lord, he prophesied unto Coriantumr that if he and his household would repent, the Lord would give unto him his kingdom and would spare the people, otherwise, they should be destroyed and all his household, except himself, and he should only live to see the fulfilling of the prophecies which had been spoken concerning another people receiving the land for their inheritance. He predicted that Coriantumr should receive burial at their hands, and every soul should be destroyed save it were Coriantumr. Hearing all

this, yet Coriantumr did not repent.

Years of turmoil and fighting followed, years which brought degeneration and sorrow to a wicked people. A curse came upon the land.

Wherefore every man did cleave unto that which was his own, with his hands, and would not borrow neither would he lend; and every man kept the hilt of his sword in his right hand, in the defense of his property and his own life and of his wives and children (Ether 14:2).

Coriantumr defended his kingdom against the armies of Shared; Shared's brother Gilead; Lib; and finally Lib's brother Shiz. Shiz was a fierce warrior who pursued Coriantumr, destroying many cities and slaying women and children. The people feared him, so much so the cry went forth in the land—"Who can stand before the army of Shiz?" (Ether 14:18). Part of the people fled to the army of Shiz, and a part of them fled to the army of Coriantumr.

The war was of such intensity and duration that the whole face of the land was covered with the slain. The war was so swift and speedy that there was

none left to bury the dead, but they did march forth from the shedding of blood to the shedding of blood, leaving the bodies of both men, women, and children strewed upon the face of the land, to become a prey to the worms of the flesh (Ether 14:22).

Shiz, continued to pursue Coriantumr, actuated by two motives: first, to avenge the death of his brother, who had been slain; and second, to prove false the prophecy of Ether that Coriantumr should not fall by the sword.

During one of the subsequent battles, Shiz inflicted several deep wounds on Coriantumr. Fainting because of the loss of blood, Coriantumr was carried away as though dead. When Coriantumr had recovered of his wounds he began to remember the words of Ether. He saw that there had been slain "two millions of mighty men, and also their wives and children" (Ether 15:2). He began to repent of the evil he had done, sorrow entered his heart, "and his soul mourned and refused to be comforted."

And he wrote a letter to Shiz proffering to relinquish his rights in the kingdom to Shiz for the sake of the lives of the people. Shiz replied that the only condition under which he would spare the lives of the people was that he might slay Coriantumr with his own sword.

This only served to anger the followers of Coriantumr, and the battles were renewed. In his narrative of the final battles, Moroni wrote:

The army of Coriantumr did pitch their tents by the hill Ramah; and it was that same hill where my father Mormon did hide up the records unto the Lord, which were sacred (Ether 15:11).

Coriantumr and Shiz were four years preparing for the last great battles, gathering together all the people who were on the land of promise, men, women, and children "save it was Ether." The women and children were armed with weapons of war and fought in the battles. After the second day of battle, Coriantumr wrote a second letter to Shiz, again proffering the kingdom if he would but spare the lives of the people. But the Spirit

of the Lord had ceased to strive with them, wherefore they went again to battle.

Finally, all had fallen in battle, save only Coriantumr and Shiz, and Shiz had fainted with the loss of blood. Coriantumr leaned upon his sword, rested a little, and then be-headed Shiz.

The prophecies of Ether had been literally fulfilled, and Ether had been a witness of their fulfillment. Obedient to God's command, he finished the twenty-four gold plates, which record was Moroni's source for his history in *The Book of Ether*, and hid them where they were later found and preserved by the people of Limhi.

"Now the last words which are written by Ether are these: Whether the Lord will that I be translated, or that I suffer the will of the Lord in the flesh, it mattereth not, if it so be that I am saved in the kingdom of God. Amen" (Ether 15:34).

After Moroni recorded the words of Ether concerning hope and faith (see Ether 12:4), Moroni interpolated in the narrative of the final destruction of the Jaredites an interesting and inspirational exposition of the three cardinal principles of Christianity, faith, hope, and charity.

Moroni explains that faith is things which are hoped for but not seen. He warns that there will be no witness until after the trial of faith; and cites examples from Nephite history to validate his claim. He points out that Christ did not show himself to the Nephites after he had risen from the dead until after the people had faith in him. Continuing, Moroni writes that it

was by faith that the law of Moses was given to the Israelites.

Moroni then directs his attention to the relationship which exists between faith and miracles, writing "if there be no faith among the children of men God can do no miracle among them" (Ether 12:12).

He cites four examples: first, he refers to the incident in Nephite history in which the faith of Alma and Amulek caused the prison in which they were incarcerated to tumble to the ground. Second, that it was the faith of Nephi and Lehi that wrought the change in the hearts of the Lamanites, a change which made possible their baptism with fire and with the Holy Ghost.

Third, that it was the faith of Ammon and his brethren which wrought so great a miracle among the Lamanites. "Yea, and even all they who wrought miracles wrought them by faith, even those who were before Christ and also those who were after" (Ether 12:16).

Moroni then points out, fourth, an incident which occurred after Christ:

"And it was by faith that the three disciples obtained a promise that they should not taste of death; and they obtained not the promise until after their faith" (Ether 12:17).

Moroni writes of seeing and talking to Christ. Worried over the possible reception of *The Book of Mormon* by the gentiles in the last days, fearing that they would mock at his words because of the ineffective manner in which he felt he had written, he presented his problem to the Savior. Jesus replied:

Fools mock, but they shall mourn; and my grace is sufficient for the meek, that they shall take no advantage of your weakness; And if men come unto me I will show unto them their weakness. I give unto men weakness that they may be humble (Ether 12:26, 27).

Having heard these words, Moroni was comforted. Speaking to the Savior, he continued:

And now I know that this love which thou hast had for the children of men is charity; wherefore, except men shall have charity they cannot inherit that place which thou hast prepared in the mansions of thy Father. Wherefore, I know by this thing which thou hast said, that if the Gentiles have not charity, because of our weakness, thou wilt prove them, and take away their talent (Ether 12:35).

And Moroni prayed unto the Lord that he would give charity unto the gentiles.

Regarding the second virtue, hope, Moroni writes little, stressing chiefly that "man must hope, or he cannot receive an inheritance in the place which thou [God] hast prepared" (Ether 12:32).

Moroni concludes this long interpolation in his history of the Jaredites by bidding farewell to the gentiles, by testifying that he has seen the Christ, and by giving the gentiles grave admonitions:

And now I would commend you to seek this Jesus of whom the prophets and apostles have written, that the grace of God the Father, and also the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost, which beareth record of them, may be and abide in you forever. Amen (Ether 12:41).

This twelfth chapter of the Book of Ether thus becomes a new witness that Jesus is the Christ, and presents a strong appeal for the gentiles of the last days to give credence to this noble message.

Questions for Discussion

1. Do you have sympathy for Coriantumr in his repentance?
2. How were prophecies concerning Coriantumr literally fulfilled in this lesson?
3. What is Moroni's view of the three cardinal principles of the gospel?
4. What were the teachings of Ether concerning the history of the world? (See Ether 13.)

Visiting Teacher Messages

Book of Mormon Gems of Truth

Lesson 6—"Now It Is Better That a Man Should Be Judged of God Than of Man, for the Judgments of God Are Always Just, but the Judgments of Man Are not Always Just" (Mosiah 29:12).

Leone O. Jacobs

For Tuesday, March 4, 1952

Objective: To show that we should refrain from judging each other.

IT seems to be a very common trait in human beings, freely to pass judgment upon our fellow men. King Mosiah, in speaking to his

people gave us the kernel of thought on this subject and the indisputable reason why we, as mortals, are not competent to judge. Whereas the