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## Characters and Teachings of the Book of Mormon: Lesson 20—Ammon and the People of Limhi

Author(s): Leland H. Monson

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## *Theology*—Characters and Teachings of The Book of Mormon

### Lesson 20—Ammon and the People of Limhi

Elder Leland H. Monson

(Text: The Book of Mormon: Mosiah 7-26)

For Tuesday, January 5, 1954

Objective: To give a singular example of how this land of promise was a land of opportunity only so long as the people had faith in Jesus Christ.

#### *Ammon Leads Men to Lehi-Nephi*

**W**EARIED by the pleadings of his people who were anxious to go to the land of Lehi-Nephi to inquire about their brethren who had gone there years before and had not been heard from since their departure, King Mosiah chose sixteen strong men and sent them to this land. Ammon was chosen as their leader. These sixteen men wandered for forty days in the wilderness and finally pitched their tents north of the land of Shilom by a hill.

Evidently feeling that he had discovered the land for which he was searching, Ammon and three of his men, Amaleki, Helem, and Hem, went into the land of Nephi. They met King Limhi and his guards near the gate of the city. Ammon and his men were surrounded by the king's guard, taken, bound, and committed to prison, for King Limhi suspected that they were the wicked priests of King Noah, his enemies. There they remained for

two days before they had their bands loosed and were taken before the king for trial.

#### *Ammon Meets King Limhi*

On the occasion of their trial, King Limhi commanded them to answer his questions. First, however, he introduced himself as King Limhi and explained that his father was King Noah, who was a son of Zeniff. This man Zeniff, King Limhi said, had come from the land of Zarahemla years before, he being a man who was overzealous to inherit this land of Lehi-Nephi, the land of their fathers.

Limhi undoubtedly knew of the earlier journey, how a large number of men had gone into the wilderness from Zarahemla to return to this land of Nephi, and how because their leader was a strong-willed and a contentious man, civil strife had occurred and all but fifty had been slain in the wilderness. These fifty returned to Zarahemla to relate the sad misfortune.

Probably Limhi also knew how

Zeniff, a member of this group of fifty, had gathered together as many as desired to accompany him on a second journey to the land of Nephi. (See Omni 27-30.) Zeniff had made arrangements with the king of the Lamanites, who controlled the land of Nephi, to have possession of the cities of Lehi-Nephi, and of Shilom and the land round about. Zeniff had successfully established his colony in these two places. But he had been deceived by King Laman and really brought his people into captivity. Limhi, however, did not complete this story to Ammon. Instead, he asked why Ammon and his men were so bold as to come near the walls of the city when he was there with his guards.

#### *King Limhi Welcomes Ammon*

The king was a surprised and astonished man as Ammon bowed before him and said:

O king, I am very thankful before God this day that I am yet alive, and am permitted to speak; and I will endeavor to speak with boldness; For I am assured that if ye had known me ye would not have suffered that I should have worn these bands. For I am Ammon, and am a descendant of Zarahemla, and have come up out of the land of Zarahemla to inquire concerning our brethren, whom Zeniff brought up out of that land (Mosiah 7:12-13).

King Limhi reported how he had sent a group of forty-three men out in search of Zarahemla. This group had not found Zarahemla, but had returned with a report of having discovered the last remains of a once mighty civilization and had brought back twenty-four gold plates [Book of Ether] filled with engravings. They had believed the ruins to be of Zarahemla.

King Limhi rejoiced with Ammon.

Now, I know of a surety that my brethren who were in the land of Zarahemla are yet alive. And now, I will rejoice; and on the morrow I will cause that my people shall rejoice also (Mosiah 7:14).

That Limhi and his people were in bondage to the Lamanites, and were required to pay a grievous tax, was soon made known to Ammon and his group by the king. Anxious to free himself and his people from this bondage, King Limhi urged these men to help him plan a way of escape.

Ammon, Amaleki, Helem, and Hem returned to the land of Shilom where the remainder of their group was encamped and took them with them to the land of Lehi-Nephi.

#### *King Limhi Calls His People to Repentance and Promises Deliverance to Them*

King Limhi called a general meeting of his people to convene at the temple on the next day. When they were assembled, King Limhi addressed the group. He spoke words of comfort to them, telling them that in the near future they would be released from subjection to the Lamanites. He asked them to place their faith in the God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, the God of Israel who brought the children of Israel out of Egypt and made it possible for them to walk through the Red Sea on dry ground, the God who brought their own fathers out of the land of Jerusalem and protected and preserved them.

And then Limhi referred to a



great truth which they could fully understand, that they were in bondage because of the iniquities and abominations of King Noah and the people. King Limhi said:

For if this people had not fallen into transgression the Lord would not have suffered that this great evil should come upon them (Mosiah 7:25).

Limhi then detailed some of the wickedness of the people, pointing out that they had put to death a prophet of the Lord because he bore testimony of the future appearance of Christ among the children of men.

After recalling this incident to their minds, King Limhi asked, "Who wondereth that they are in bondage, and that they are smitten with sore affliction; For the Lord has said:

I will not succor my people in the day of their transgression; but I will hedge up their ways that they prosper not; and their doings shall be as a stumbling block before them. And again, he saith: If my people shall sow filthiness they shall reap the chaff thereof in the whirlwind; and the effect thereof is poison. And again he saith: If my people shall sow filthiness they shall reap the east wind, which bringeth immediate destruction (Mosiah 7:29-31).

Limhi told them that their affliction was nothing but the fulfillment of prophecy. The great English historian, Thomas Carlyle, in his four-volume history of the French Revolution pointed out to his readers, that the French Revolution was nothing but the delayed justice of God working itself out on a corrupt civilization. He further declared that God's justice might be delayed a day or so, a year or so, but it was certain to come. Carlyle, like Lim-

hi, gave an implicit argument that sometimes God sends evil rulers to a people to punish them for their wickedness.

After assuring them that there was a definite causal connection between their wickedness and their punishment, Limhi promised his people that if they would serve God with diligence, he would deliver them from bondage.

King Limhi then called upon Ammon to speak to the people. Ammon rehearsed much that had happened in Zarahemla since Zeniff left it years before. He also gave the people the last message of King Benjamin. Then the meeting was adjourned and the multitude was dismissed to return home.

#### *Ammon Declares Power of Mosiah to Translate Records*

In the presence of Ammon, King Limhi had his servants bring the record of Zeniff, which contained an account of the history of the people since they left Zarahemla. Limhi told Ammon that the forty-three men he sent to locate Zarahemla (Mosiah 8:7) had brought back, in addition to the twenty-four gold plates [Book of Ether] many breastplates made of brass and copper, and also swords, whose hilts had disappeared and the blades of which were corroded with rust. He asked Ammon if he could translate the strange characters on the gold plates, or if he knew of anyone who could.

Ammon responded:

I can assuredly tell thee, O king, of a man that can translate the records; for he has wherewith that he can look, and translate all records that are of ancient date; and it is a gift from God. And the

things are called interpreters (Mosiah 8:13).

Limhi rejoiced with Ammon, for he now knew that he would ultimately learn the history that was engraved on the twenty-four gold plates.

As a result of the coming of Ammon and his group, King Limhi and many of his people covenanted with God to serve him and keep his commandments. Limhi desired baptism. But there was none in the land who had authority from God, and Ammon declined, considering himself an unworthy servant. (See Mosiah 21:32 ff.)

#### *People Delivered from Lamanites*

Ammon and Limhi began to consult with the people how they could deliver themselves out of bondage. They had all the people gather together that they might have the voice of the people concerning the matter. It was decided that the only way they could escape would be to flee to Zarahemla with their flocks, herds, and tents. The La-

manites were so numerous that it was deemed impossible to deliver themselves out of bondage with the sword. Gideon, a trusted advisor of the king, suggested the plan that was followed. He knew that the guards "by the back pass, through the back wall on the back side of the city" were drunken by night. He proposed that the people pay their last tribute of wine. They sent more than the tribute wine, and the people of Limhi with their gold and silver and other possessions went through the back pass into the wilderness while the guards slumbered. After traveling many days they arrived in Zarahemla where they joined with Mosiah's people and became his subjects. (See Mosiah 22.)

#### *Questions on the Lesson*

1. Why were the people living under bondage to the Lamanites?
2. In what ways do individuals pay for their violation of the moral law?
3. Do nations, as well as individuals, pay a price for unrighteousness?

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## *Change*

*Marian Schroder Crothers*

There was no sign.  
 No bitter wind, with sharpening breath  
 Had scattered scarlet leaves of trees;  
 Untouched, late flowers glowed beneath the sun,  
 For now, enchanted autumn held the land.  
 Only the blue-white haze upon the far horizon  
 Told of change;  
 Only a wedge of wild geese, winging south,  
 Gave warning  
 That winter's cold, fierce legions marched  
 To conquest,  
 Down from the northland.