



Type: Magazine Article

Characters and Teachings of The Book of Mormon: Lesson 27—Missions of Other Sons of Mosiah

Author(s): Leland H. Monson

Source: *Relief Society Magazine*, Vol. 41, No. 9 (September 1954), pp. 624-628

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

Abstract: The objective of this lesson is to show the results of exercising faith in one's self, faith in a people, and faith in one's God.



LESSON DEPARTMENT

Theology—Characters and Teachings of The Book of Mormon

Lesson 27—Missions of Other Sons of Mosiah

Elder Leland H. Monson

(Text: The Book of Mormon: Alma, chapter 21:1-8; chapters 22-28)

For Tuesday, December 7, 1954

Objective: To show the results of exercising faith in one's self, faith in a people, and faith in one's God.

Aaron Preaches in Jerusalem and Middoni

DURING the period of time when Ammon was actively engaged in his missionary work in the lands of Ishmael and Middoni, Aaron, Omner, and Himni had been equally as active in other lands belonging to the Lamanites. When we view the achievements of these missionaries over the short span of fourteen years, we begin to realize what diligent missionaries laboring in the vineyard of God can accomplish.

When these missionaries departed from each other, near the borders of Lamanite territory, each one followed the promptings of the Spirit. Aaron went to the land of Jerusalem. In this land of Jerusalem the Amulonites, descendants of the leader Amulon of the wicked priests of King Noah, the Amalekites, and the Lamanites had united in building the city of Jerusalem.

These Amalekites and Amulonites, Nephite apostates from the

Church and kingdom of God, were more wicked towards the Nephites than were the Lamanites. When Aaron first entered Jerusalem it was his misfortune to preach first to the Amalekites in their synagogues. Most of the Amalekites and Amulonites belonged to the order of Nehor. The members believed that God would save all mankind. In Jerusalem, they had built many synagogues in which to worship.

As Aaron was addressing a group of Amalekites in one of these synagogues, one of their number began to contend with him:

... Hast thou seen an angel? Why do not angels appear unto us? Behold are not this people as good as thy people? . . . How knowest thou that we are not a righteous people? (Alma 21:5-6).

“... Believest thou,” asked Aaron, “that the Son of God shall come to redeem mankind from their sins?” (Alma 21:7).

The Amalekite denied any such belief. Then it was that Aaron be-

gan to explain the scriptures to him. He told him of the future appearance of Christ to mankind, of the resurrection of all mankind, and of the impossibility of the redemption of mankind except through the atoning blood of Jesus Christ. But Aaron's exposition of these precious truths served only to arouse anger. The people began to mock him. He, therefore, departed from their synagogue and traveled to the village of Ani-Anti.

There, Aaron met Muloki and Ammah and his brethren actively engaged in spreading the gospel. Few people, however, would listen to them.

The group, therefore, determined to go to the land of Middoni to see if the people there would respond more readily to their message. But few believed the words which they taught. The people expressed their bitterness towards the missionaries by casting ". . . Aaron and a certain number of his brethren . . ." (Alma 21:13) into prison. The other missionaries fled to regions roundabout.

After suffering many indignities, much pain from being bound, and much anxiety from lack of food and water, they were delivered by Lamoni and Ammon. They went forth from the prison to preach in all the synagogues of the Amalekites and of the Lamanites where they could gain admittance. It was at this time that success began to crown their efforts. Many accepted the truth, were convinced of their sins, and became fully aware of the incorrectness of the tradition of the Lamanites.

Aaron in the Land of Nephi

After Lamoni and Ammon departed from Middoni for the land of

Ishmael, Aaron was directed by the spirit to go to the land of Nephi. In this land of Nephi lived Lamoni's father, who was king over all the Lamanites in the regions roundabout. Under the inspiration of the Lord, Aaron and his brethren went directly to the king. Bowing before him, Aaron said, ". . . Behold, O king, we are the brethren of Ammon, whom thou hast delivered out of prison" (Alma 22:2).

To their surprise, the king welcomed them. He said that he had been ". . . somewhat troubled in mind because of the generosity and the greatness of the words . . ." (Alma 22:3) of Ammon and wanted to hear more of his message.

(We recall the meeting of Ammon and Lamoni and Lamoni's father as given in the former lesson. See Alma 20:8-26.)

In response to the king's request to hear more of the truth, Aaron instructed him further, asking if he believed in God. The king responded favorably, saying:

. . . I believe that the Great Spirit created all things, and I desire that ye should tell me concerning all these things, and I will believe thy words (Alma 22:11).

Conversion of King and Lamanites

After Aaron had explained the fundamentals of the gospel, the king asked what he might do to merit eternal life. ". . . Behold, said he, I will give up all that I possess, yea, I will forsake my kingdom, that I may receive this great joy" (Alma 22:15). He was told that he must repent of his sins and have faith in the Redeemer of the world. Overpowered by the Spirit as he prayed for a remission of sins, ". . . he was struck as if he were dead" (Alma 22:18).

When the queen was called, she thought Aaron and his brethren were the cause of the king's fall, so she commanded her servants to slay the missionaries, but the servants were afraid. She then told them to call the people to kill Aaron and his brethren. Fearing what might happen, Aaron: ". . . put forth his hand and raised the king from the earth, and said unto him: Stand. And he stood upon his feet, receiving his strength" (Alma 22:22). As a result of this miracle the king ministered unto his household, ". . . inasmuch that his whole household were converted unto the Lord" (Alma 22:23).

The king asked Aaron and his brethren to teach the gospel to his people. He sent a proclamation throughout all the land, among all his people, commanding them not to lay their hands on Ammon, Aaron, Omner, or Himni, or any of their brethren in their missionary labors. (See Alma 23:1.) The king was anxious that:

. . . his people might be convinced concerning the wicked traditions of their fathers, and that they might be convinced that they were all brethren, and that they ought not to murder, nor to plunder, nor to steal, nor to commit adultery, nor to commit any number of wickedness . . . as many of the Lamanites as believed in their preaching, and were converted unto the Lord, never did fall away (Alma 23:3, 6).

The missionaries now met with great success. Thousands accepted the truth and made their lives correspond with it. Many Lamanites in the lands of Ishmael, Middoni, Shilom, Shemlon, and in the cities of Nephi, Lemuel, and Shimnlon were converted, but only one Amal-

ekite and no Amulonites were converted.

Converted Lamanites Called Anti-Nephi-Lehies

The king and his converted people were desirous of adopting a new name to distinguish them from those who had not received the gospel. They decided to call themselves Anti-Nephi-Lehies. From that time forward they were known by their new name and not as Lamanites.

The Amalekites, Amulonites, and unconverted Lamanites no longer would accept the converted king as their ruler. The king conferred the kingdom upon his son, who was called Anti-Nephi-Lehi. In the meantime, while the unconverted were making preparation for war, the converted king died.

The missionaries and the people of Anti-Nephi-Lehi were greatly disturbed over the preparations of war against them. The missionaries held a council with Lamoni and his brother Anti-Nephi-Lehi to determine how they should defend themselves against the Lamanites. The king, deeply grieved over his and his people's sins, resulting from their false traditions, recommended to his people that since it was all they had been able to do to repent sufficiently before God so that he would take away their stains and inasmuch as their swords had become bright, that they should never again stain them with the blood of their brethren. They, therefore, refused to take up arms against the Lamanites. Instead of preparing for war, they buried their swords and all weapons ". . . used for the shedding of man's blood . . ." (Alma 24:17)

deep in the earth. They covenanted with God:

. . . that rather than shed the blood of their brethren they would give up their own lives; and rather than take away from a brother they would give unto him; and rather than spend their days in idleness they would labor abundantly with their hands (Alma 24:18).

Having accepted the truth, they were steadfast in keeping this covenant and would suffer death rather than commit sin.

Wars With Lamanites

When the Lamanites came against them, well armed and disciplined for battle, the people of Anti-Nephi-Lehi prostrated themselves before them. "And thus without meeting any resistance, they did slay a thousand and five of them. . ." (Alma 24:22). When the Lamanites saw the people of Anti-Nephi-Lehi would lie down and perish, ". . . they did forbear from slaying them . . ." (Alma 24:24) and repented of that which they had done. Many Lamanites joined with the people of Anti-Nephi-Lehi and became faithful members in the Church. They were joined by more people than those who were slain. All who joined were actual descendants of Laman and Lemuel.

The Lamanites were angry at having slain their brethren the Anti-Nephi-Lehies, so they went over into the borders of the land of Zarahemla, and it was then that they destroyed Ammonihah. In the battles those who were slain by the Nephites were nearly all descendants of the priests of Noah, the Amulonites.

The Amulonites had those Lamanites put to death by burning,

who, remembering the words of Aaron and his brethren, began to disbelieve the false traditions of their fathers and to become converted

This martyrdom stirred up contention in the wilderness, ". . . and the Lamanites began to hunt the seed of Amulon and his brethren and began to slay them. . ." (Alma 25:8). And thus was the prophecy of Abinadi fulfilled. (See Alma 25:8-12.)

The Missionaries Rejoice

Ammon, Aaron, Omner, and Himni rejoiced exceedingly. Ammon gloried in the Lord. Aaron felt that Ammon was boasting about the achievements and rebuked him. Ammon, however, said:

. . . I do not boast in my own strength, nor in my own wisdom; but behold, my joy is full, yea, my heart is brim with joy, and I will rejoice in my God (Alma 26:11).

Ammon recalled to his brethren an incident which occurred fourteen years earlier in Zarahemla when they first announced their intentions to labor to convert the Lamanites, as to how they were laughed to scorn. However, because of their faith in their God, they had been successful.

Under the leadership of Ammon, the converted Lamanites were taken from their lands to Zarahemla, where they were given the privilege of settling in the land of Jershon. They were protected by the Nephites against Lamanite invasions so that they would not have to break their covenant with God.

After they were settled in Jershon, the greatest battle was fought since Lehi left Jerusalem. And in the fif-

teenth year of Judges the people mourned for their dead.

Alma concluded chapter twenty-eight:

And thus we see how great the inequality of man is because of sin and transgression, and the power of the devil, which comes by the cunning plans which he hath devised to ensnare the hearts of men.

And thus we see the great call of diligence of men to labor in the vineyards of the Lord; and thus we see the great rea-

son of sorrow, and also of rejoicing—sorrow because of death and destruction among men, and joy because of the light of Christ unto life (Alma 28:13-14).

Questions on the Lesson

1. Why did these missionaries achieve such signal success?
2. What does faith in our ability under God's direction do, to help us achieve success?
3. How did the converted Lamanites show their allegiance to the truth?
4. How can we, as mothers, help to strengthen missionary work in our Church?

Visiting Teacher Messages

Book of Mormon Gems of Truth

Lesson 27—"For Behold, This Life Is the Time for Men to Prepare to Meet God; Yea, Behold the Day of This Life Is the Day for Men to Perform Their Labors" (Alma 34:32).

Leone O. Jacobs

For Tuesday, December 7, 1954

Objective: To stress the necessity of working out our salvation here and now, in mortality.

THE more we read and ponder Amulek's instructions, the more we are impressed with the fact that every moment of this life is extremely valuable to us. This earth life is of such great importance that it determines the status of our entire future existence. Though it is a relatively brief period, we shall be judged by the performance we render here. This life is a time of preparation, the plowing and the sowing time. The harvest comes later—eternal life in the presence of our Heavenly Father, if we prove worthy.

In *The Pearl of Great Price* we read:

And we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever

the Lord their God shall command them (Abraham 3:25).

From *The Discourses of Brigham Young*:

It has also been decreed by the Almighty that spirits, upon taking bodies, shall forget all they had known previously, or they could not have a day of trial—could not have an opportunity for proving themselves in darkness and temptation, in unbelief and wickedness, to prove themselves worthy of eternal existence (Chapter IV, Pre-Existence, *The Plan of Salvation*, 1925 Edition, page 60).

The purpose of this life is to gain knowledge and experience with the body and spirit combined, and, through this experience, to prove our worthiness. The labors of this life cannot be postponed until some