



Type: Magazine Article

Akish, the Jaredite

Author(s): George Reynolds

Source: *Juvenile Instructor*, Vol. 26, No. 20 (15 October 1891), pp. 631–633

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

Abstract: An article for youth that draws attention to the fact that the downfall of the Jaredites was due to their desire to have a king rule over them. King Akish's deeds of cruelty, treachery, and iniquity created a kingdom so filled with corruption and secret societies that civil war broke out and ended only after the destruction of the nation.

of land, about ninety miles east of Memphis, Tennessee, and moved on it. He erected buildings and concluded to settle there. He was now in a fair way to become a wealthy and noted man. Business often called him to the city, where he would remain for days at a time. It was about this time that the demon of intemperance seized him. He would come home intoxicated, and, when under the influence of liquor, was cross and disagreeable among his once loved and cherished family. His mind was continually bothered, and he could now feel the awful darkness the Elder predicted should come upon him. In the spring he bought more land, still determined to banish all trouble and thought of the Mormon principles, but they followed him wherever he went.

In August, 1845, he visited the town where he first met the Mormon Elder, and learned that his two Mormon friends, Brothers N——, were about to start to Nauvoo on business for that branch of the Church. Deeper impressed than ever, he determined to visit Nauvoo with those two Elders.

They all went to his home, and he told his wife of his intention; she was quite pleased with the idea and prepared his clothing. There were other Elders in the country now, and Mr. B—— had silently concluded to accept the principles he had so long known to be true; but again hesitated. He felt that he could not be satisfied with another Elder officiating in his baptism.

They walked ninety miles to the city of Memphis; there they took steamer, and thence to Nauvoo. On their arrival at President Young's residence, he took each of the Elders by the hand in a warm and friendly way and, though he had never seen them before, said, "Welcome, brethren." He then took Mr. B——'s hand and said, "Whence came this man?" One of the Elders said, "He is a seeker after truth." At which the President accosted him thus: "Walk in, sir."

In a short time Mr. B—— set out in search of Brother C——, whom he found working on the top of the Nauvoo House. As soon

as Brother C—— saw him he exclaimed, "Well, well, Mr. B——! You have come to be baptized, have you? Glad to see you."

Mr. B—— then asked him to get down at once and complete his prophecy, for all the rest had come to pass.

Brother C—— willingly baptized him. Mr. B—— had walked ninety miles, and was ready to walk a thousand, if necessary, thus completely fulfilling the words of Brother C——.

Mr. B—— then returned home, and his family were baptized in September, 1845, and in February, 1846, they emigrated to Nauvoo, where they arrived a short time after President Young's company started for Utah. In about three weeks they started with the second company to follow the President, then seeking a home for the Saints. They were among those who stopped in Mt. Pisgah a short time, but arrived in Salt Lake Valley October 2nd, 1850. Brother B—— was ever an active and faithful member in this Church up to the time of his death, which occurred September 28th, 1888. He was a patriarch of one of the Stakes of Zion, and lived to the ripe age of eighty-two years. I.

AKISH, THE JAREDITE.

THE history of Akish is one with which are associated deeds of cruelty, treachery and iniquity that are scarcely paralleled in the annals of any nation. When the Jaredites first reached this continent they were a righteous, God-fearing, though somewhat unstable people. They, however, made one great mistake, they desired to be ruled by a king. Their prophet-leaders told them that this thing would lead to captivity, but they insisted, and Orihah, the youngest son of Jared, was chosen as their first monarch. The words of their prophets were quickly fulfilled, and bloodshed and internal commotions soon disgraced the history of this favored people. Orihah was succeeded by Kib, who was dethroned by Corihor, but afterwards restored.

In the succeeding reign, that of Shule, the kingdom was rent in twain, but when he died he was succeeded by his son Omer, who, we have reason to believe, was a measurably good man. The example of the kings and princes had thus far, as a rule, been very pernicious, and tended to encourage the people in lives of wickedness.

Omer had a son named Jared, an ambitious, unscrupulous man. He rebelled against his father and by his flatteries led half the people to join his standard. He established himself in a land named Heth, and when he felt sufficiently strong he gave battle to and defeated the forces of his father, whom he took prisoner and held in captivity; and, it is said, Omer remained in this condition half his days. So long, indeed, was the time that Jared kept him prisoner that sons begotten by him during his captivity grew up to manhood before he was released. Two of these young men, named Esrom and Coriantumr, became very angry at the way their father was treated, and they raised an army and attacked their brother Jared by night. This attack appears to have been an utter surprise to Jared, for his army was entirely destroyed, and he himself would have been slain had he not humbly pled with his brothers that his life might be spared, he promising that he would surrender the kingdom to his father. On this condition his life was granted him.

Now Jared, though he had made this promise when his life was in peril, still longed for the glories and power of the kingly authority; and his sorrow and unrest could not be hid from those near him.

Among those who noticed his deep-seated grief was a daughter, who, we are told, was exceeding fair, and was apparently as unscrupulous and void of conscience as her father. Whether it was because she really had affection for her father, or, like him, languished for the pomp and magnificence of the court life she no longer possessed that caused her to submit to him a plan by which he might regain the kingdom, cannot be told; perhaps, also, she loved the man who she suggested as

the instrument to be used in the fulfillment of her ambitions—possibly all three, for our motives are seldom single; our actions, in other words, are generally the result of a combination of motives.

The young lady's plan was this: She reminded her father that when their ancestors came across the great waters they brought with them records of the doings of mankind in ancient days—in the ages before the flood. And in that record was an account of how men by secret plans and combinations obtained kingdoms and great glory. She suggested that her father acquire a knowledge of these unholy methods and use them to regain the throne. She further proposed that he send for Akish, the son of Kimnor, and she, being graceful as well as beautiful, would dance so entrancingly before him that he would desire her to wife. If she did not love Akish, she simply sold herself to gratify her father's and possibly her own ambition.

Her advice was listened to, her suggestions carried out. The old oaths and bloody mysteries were searched out, the plan laid, Akish invited, the suggestive dance danced, Akish's passions inflamed and the maiden asked in marriage. The proposal was received with favor, but terrible conditions were attached, such that would have appalled any honorable man. It was that Akish should obtain for Jared the head of his father the king, and to enable him to carry out this murderous design Jared suggested that he administer to his friends the old oaths that had come down from the days of Cain, the first murderer.

Akish accepted this terrible responsibility. He gathered his associates at the house of Jared and there made them all swear by the God of heaven, and by the heavens, by the earth and by their heads that whoso should vary from what Akish desired should lose his head, and whoso should divulge whatever Akish made known should lose his life. He then submitted his plans to them, which they accepted, and the plot was so far successful that they overthrew the kingdom of Omer but did not succeed in obtaining his head.

For the Lord was merciful to Omer and warned him in a dream to depart out of the land. So taking those of his family who were faithful to him he traveled for a great distance until he reached the shores of the Atlantic Ocean. There he and his companions tarried until the course of events permitted him to return.

Omer being driven from his kingdom, Jared was anointed king, and his daughter was given to Akish to wife. But this did not satisfy Akish; he had learned the power of these secret combinations, and now determined to use them for his own ends. He aspired to the throne, and made up his mind to murder his father-in-law. So he assembled his followers, instructed them in his wishes, and Jared was slain by them as he sat on his throne giving audience to the people; a case of poetical retribution which, though often found in fiction, is seldom met with in real life.

Akish was now made king, and under his rule wickedness became almost universal; the secret societies by which he obtained power had corrupted the hearts of all the people. As may be well supposed, with such a condition of society his throne was not a stable one. He became jealous of one of his sons. What cause, if any, he had therefor we are not told, but he shut him up in prison and slowly starved him to death. This cruel act greatly incensed another of Jared's sons, named Nimrah, and he, gathering a few followers, fled to the land where Omer dwelt.

Now Akish had other sons, and though they had sworn to support him in all his doings, they were not true to their oaths. They found that the hearts of the Jaredites were consumed with the love of gain, and they bribed the greater portion of the people to join them in a revolt against their father. So corrupt had the people now become that their extinction appears to have been the only remedy; they were past repentance.

A war of the most horrible character broke out, which lasted several years, and only ended when nearly every soul was slain. Of

the kingdom of Akish, for which he had sinned so much, there remained but thirty souls, all the rest—men, women and children—had been swept by bloody hands into untimely graves.

The people of Akish having been thus destroyed, Omer, with his friends, returned from his captivity, and reigned over the feeble remnant of a wasted people.

George Reynolds.

THE CELEBRATED DR. JOHNSON.

MANY of us have read Johnson's "Rasselas," or "The Happy Valley," the first sentence of which has been said to be the finest in the English language. But a good many do not know what a great heart he had, as shown by the following:

No man, said one who knew him, loved the poor like Dr. Johnson. His own personal expenses did not reach £100 a year, but his house in Bolt Court, after the receipt of the pension, became the home for as many helpless ones as he could support and aid.

When Johnson took his walk in Fleet Street he found his way into sad homes of distress. He visited the sick and the sad, helped them, and interceded for them with his friends. He always had small change in his pocket for the beggars. When he was himself sometimes in want of a dinner, after his first coming to London, he would slip pennies into the hands of ragged children asleep at night on the door sills, that when they awoke in the morning they might find the possibility of breakfast. One night he found a wretched and lost woman so lying, worn by sickness, carried her on his back to his own home, had her cared for until health was restored, and then found her an honest place in life.

No man ever miscarried because his life was short, but because it was bad. That life is long enough that despatches the task of it.