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Stories from the Book of Mormon: Lesson 3—Nephi, a Leader in the Land of Promise

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Abstract: This lesson's objective was to show the rewards of righteousness.

they have a divine faith in their country, their Government, and in the people. The faith remains today, and for this reason there is a fineness to American character which will not allow America to become so seriously infected as to be destroyed by the false "isms" of Europe and other parts of the world. Americans are growing in religious feeling, for they are discovering that religion is the foundation of freedom and justice. It may be said today as it was said by a statesman over a hundred years ago:

I see the dawn of a new and illustrious vision. I see the nation rising from its present depression with a chastened, but good spirit. I see education awakened, a spirit of sobriety ruling in work and in manners, a higher self-respect invigorating our institutions, and the bonds of our government strengthened by a holier attachment.

The building of this nation has been a long, solemn, and sacred task. It is the work of many generations of men and women who have conceived lofty ideals, and who, without regard to party, religious faith or section, "whether up in the pine

forests of Maine or over across the continent in the orange fields of California, or down on the plantations of the sunny South, have wrought for freedom, for liberty, for stability, for justice." The American people have in a singular sense regarded themselves as the instruments of Providence in the working out of a great Government and a mighty civilization.

The sacredness of our citizenship will never be given up so long as we love freedom and culture, nobility and honesty, and so long as we have respect for one another and a deep and abiding faith in the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Questions and Topics for Discussion

1. Discuss the principles of righteousness that lie at the root of our Government.
2. Why do we hold the Constitution of our country as sacred?
3. What is meant by the expression: "A government of the people?"
4. If you designate a man or woman as a good citizen, just what do you mean?
5. Discuss the statement of Theodore Roosevelt at the beginning of this lesson.

Stories from the Book of Mormon

For optional use of Relief Societies in stakes and missions in countries other than the United States, in lieu of social science lessons.

Lesson 3—Nephi, a Leader in the Land of Promise

Tuesday, January 25, 1944

Note: For the full effect of this lesson it is imperative that the teacher and class have *at hand* the Book of Mormon.

Lesson Objective: To show the rewards of righteousness.

NEPHI, the son of Lehi, was truly a great leader and a man of faith. Of him it can be said, he sought first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all things were added unto him (Matt. 6:33). He had learned in the tender years of his youth to honor his parents, and therefore he found it not hard to believe the accounts his father told of visions received from God. This parental example of seeking out the Lord led Nephi also to desire a direct answer to his prayers, with the result that God revealed himself unto Nephi and explained to him the need for a Savior and the necessity of a plan of salvation.

Other things too were made known to Nephi. He was told he should become a ruler and a teacher of his brethren, and that he would be given charge of the sacred records of his people. These records were to be of great importance in the latter days in convincing both Jew and Gentile of the mission of the Messiah.

Concerning the establishment, by Nephi, of a new nation in a new world, we read: "And it came to pass that I, Nephi, did guide the ship, that we sailed again towards the promised land. And it came to pass that after we had sailed for the space of many days we did arrive at the promised land; and we went forth upon the land, and did pitch our tents; and we did call it the promised land. And it came to pass that we did begin to till the earth, and we began to plant seeds; yea, we did put all our seeds into the earth, which we had brought from the land

of Jerusalem. And . . . they did grow exceedingly; wherefore, we were blessed in abundance. And it came to pass that we did find upon the land of promise, as we journeyed in the wilderness, that there were beasts in the forests of every kind, both the cow and the ox, and the ass and the horse, and the goat and the wild goat, and all manner of wild animals, which were for the use of men. And as we did find all manner of ore, both of gold, and of silver, and of copper" (I Nephi 18:22-25).

At another period sometime later, when there had been a division of the original group who landed upon the shores of the New World, Nephi wrote of those over whom he had been called to preside: "And I did teach my people to build buildings, and to work in all manner of wood, and of iron, and of copper, and of brass, and of steel, and of gold, and of silver, and of precious ores, which were in great abundance. And I, Nephi, did build a temple; and I did construct it after the manner of the temple of Solomon save it were not built of so many precious things; for they were not to be found upon the land, wherefore, it could not be built like unto Solomon's temple. But the manner of the construction was like unto the temple of Solomon; and the workmanship thereof was exceeding fine. And it came to pass that I, Nephi, did cause my people to be industrious, and to labor with their hands. And it came to pass that they would that I should be their king. But I, Nephi, was desirous that they should have no king; nevertheless, I did for them accord-

ing to that which was in my power” (II Nephi 5:15-18).

But though great were his accomplishments as a leader among his people, probably the most significant thing to be remembered about this good man is his delight in the word of God, a delight which carried him actively into the accomplishment of great and significant things for mankind. He knew the value of searching the books of the prophets for the words of eternal life, having been close to these writings through the making of plates upon which the record of his people was engraved. “. . . for my soul delighteth,” he says, “in the scriptures, and my heart pondereth them, and writeth them for the learning and profit of my children. Behold, my soul delighteth in the things of the Lord; and my heart pondereth continually upon the things which I have seen and heard” (II Nephi 4:15-16).

According to Nephi’s own account, he had made two sets of plates paralleling the same period of history for his people. The first set, more secular in nature, dealt largely with the wars and contentions and destructions of his people. The second set, written by express commandment of the Lord, includes the writings of Nephi found in the Book of Mormon as we know it today. Nephi has this to say for the smaller or second set of plates: “And it came to pass that the Lord commanded me, wherefore I did make plates of ore that I might engraven upon them the record of my people. And upon the plates which I made I did engraven the record of my father, and also our journeyings in the wilderness, and the prophecies of my fa-

ther; and also many of mine own prophecies have I engraven upon them. And I knew not at the time when I made them that I should be commanded of the Lord to make these plates; wherefore, the record of my father, and the genealogy of his fathers, and the more part of all our proceedings in the wilderness are engraven upon those plates of which I have spoken; wherefore, the things which transpired before I made these plates are, of a truth, more particularly made mention upon the first plates. And after I had made these plates by way of commandment, I, Nephi, received a commandment *that the ministry and the prophecies, the more plain and precious parts of them, should be written upon these plates; and that the things which were written should be kept for the instruction of my people, who should possess the land, and also for other wise purposes, which purposes are known unto the Lord*” (I Nephi 19:1-3).

There is power in the direct and simple words of Nephi which comes from his knowledge of the truth. This prophet saw in vision the birth, death, and resurrection of the Christ hundreds of years before these events were to occur upon the earth, and his understanding of the marvelous gift of God in sending His Son is described in the language of the heart. If one wonders at the magnitude of Christ’s atonement as it is written in the Bible, then let him read Nephi’s account of the mission of the Messiah. Herein is a most satisfying experience. Nephi’s words concerning the coming of the Savior have, for one seeking the truth, that quiet persuasive power that is not

unlike that given through the voice of a friend.

Questions for Active Reading and Discussion

With the help of the suggestive readings given below have the class carry on the discussion as follows: first, answer the question; second, read the passage given to discover plain and precious truths of the Gospel brought to light in the Book of Mormon. If time permits, have each member of the class add a passage of his own from within that part of the Book of

Mormon (II Nephi, chapters 5 to 33) that gives Nephi's words concerning Christ to his people—a passage that has brought new meaning to a Gospel truth.

1. Why is it hard to understand many of the great prophecies concerning the mission of Christ found in the Bible? Read II Nephi, chapter 25.

The next question may be used if needed for class activity, or it may be assigned for home study:

2. In what condition will be the churches of the world in the latter days?

How will new scripture be received? Read II Nephi, chapters 28, 29.

L.D.S. Girls and Women in Wartime

(Continued from page 606)

The modern slogan that women are entitled to equal rights and opportunities with men has led some women into fallacies of thought and practice that are very damaging to them and to the future welfare of mankind. In the first place, as to moral standards, equality of rights and practices should mean that men should live up to the standards they expect of high-class women. To assume that women may indulge in the same practices that some men indulge in means that woman is simply degrading herself. From another point of view equality of rights does not mean absence of differences and duties any more than does the phrase, "all men are created free and equal." The facts are, of course, that in many respects they are unequal. So in many ways men and women are different and unequal. Each sex may be superior in some respects and inferior in other respects. The difference in biological structure and func-

tions is self-evident. The differences psychologically and socially are not so visibly manifest but are nevertheless a fact. Men and women are complements of each other. The more fully and frankly this is recognized and the life of the family and of society organized and operated on this principle, the greater will be the success and the lasting happiness of both men and women.

While it may not be the destiny of every woman to become a wife and mother, to live worthy of motherhood in the highest and most sacred meaning of the term is her proper destiny and road to enduring happiness. Women who have no children of their own can generally find opportunities to take a motherly interest in children of relatives, friends, and neighbors, and in this service find at least some of the satisfactions that go with successful motherhood. Any part in the creation or development of successful lives is one of the greatest contributions to religion.