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Book of Mormon Studies

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Abstract: This is a series of articles intended for Relief Society course study. It discusses the importance of the Book of Mormon, its coming forth (i.e., the translation, the witnesses, the publication, Joseph Smith), brief overview of its contents, and explains the text from 1 Nephi 1 through Alma 58. Each article features several questions that are helpful in synthesizing and applying the Book of Mormon to daily life.

This would be a poverty-stricken world indeed if it held nothing beyond what I can comprehend. Like all the rest of mankind I am often confronted with the divergent opinions and contending claims of men on affairs pertaining to earth-life through which we are now passing, sometimes touching matters related to the spiritual. If I know, or if by diligent and prayerful search of the scriptures I find that the Lord has spoken on the question at issue, my faith brings me the enlightening and comforting assurance as to what is right; for I know that He is true, and that every man opposed to Him is in the wrong.

The word of the Lord must endure, whether uttered from His own lips or delivered by the voice of holy men called to be prophets and revelators unto the people. Through communication to Joseph Smith the Prophet, given on November 1st, 1831, this divine proclamation was made for the guidance of the children of men:

“What I the Lord have spoken, I have spoken, and I excuse not myself; and though the heavens and the earth pass away, my word shall not pass away, but shall all be fulfilled, whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same. For behold, and lo, the Lord is God, and the Spirit beareth record, and the record is true, and the truth abideth forever and ever. Amen.”

RELIEF SOCIETY

BOOK OF MORMON STUDIES

For the first lesson in September

THE LAST great fratricidal struggle of the Nephites with the Lamanites is not pleasant to contemplate, but it is history, it has its intersprinkling of doctrine, and it teaches many applicable moral lessons. Read Mormon, chapters 4 to 9, inclusive.

If the Book of Mormon student will let her mind turn back to the beginning of Nephite and Lamanite encounters, she will be impressed with the fact that all through the centuries the Nephites have fought, almost without exception, in defense of their homes and their rights. They have seldom, if ever, begun strife, and have never taken the offensive except as their safety demanded it. For this and other reasons the Lord prospered their cause, and their armies had been victorious, except in such times as they needed chastisement for evil doing.

Now, however, the tables turned, and the Nephites did a disastrous thing—they undertook an aggressive war, a war of revenge upon the Lamanites. The Lord no longer prospered their cause, because their motive was unworthy. Both the help and the Spirit of God departed from them for their much wickedness, and they were left to be miserably exterminated in their

sins. The letter of Mormon to his son Moroni telling him of this destruction is helplessly pathetic.

So much for the history. Now for the application. May we not learn from this that, whether in war or in just living from day to day, however we may be justified in defending ourselves against unmerited attacks, we are never justified in going out of our way to stir up trouble or in taking the initiative in making a brother or sister uncomfortable?

QUESTIONS

1. Throughout Book of Mormon history what type of wars have the Nephites been engaged in? How was this changed in the last period? What were the results?

2. From the time Mormon first refused to lead the Nephites they were almost wholly unsuccessful. When he led them again the wickedness of the people caused them still to be unsuccessful. What does the first act indicate as to the power and responsibility of leadership? What does the second act indicate as to the nature and support of the followers for successful leadership?

3. What prophecies does Mormon make concerning the coming forth of the sacred records? How have they been fulfilled, at least in part?

4. The Spirit of God will not forever strive with men, said the Lord. How was this shown in the last Book of Mormon battle? Tell of the results.

5. How does Mormon show his greatness and his true love for mankind—even his enemies, the Lamanites?

6. What was to be the only worth of the sacred plates, according to the decree of God? Tell of Mormon's warning to those who condemn the things of God.

7. Contrast Mormon 9: 17-27, with the generally accepted religious doctrine of to-day.

R. I. E.

WORD OF WISDOM LESSONS (No. 9)

For the third lesson in September

ALL WHOLESOME FOODS

A Mixed Diet. We are told in the Word of Wisdom that "all wholesome herbs* (plants used for food, and vegetables) God hath ordained for the constitution, nature and use of man . . . Yea, flesh also of beasts and of the fowls of the air, I, the Lord, have ordained for the use of man with thanksgiving; nevertheless they (meats) are to be used sparingly . . . only in times of winter or of cold or famine."†

*The Oxford Dictionary of to-day defines *herb* as "plants used for food, medicine, scent, flavour, etc." Unquestionably, in the Prophet's day, the term "herb" was used more generally to include edible plants than it is to-day. In the revelation, where the term "herb" is used, the larger meaning of the word is intended.

†Doctrine and Covenants, Section 89, verses 10, 12, 13.