

“A Seer . . . Becometh a Great Benefit to His Fellow Beings”

Lesson
17
Summary

Mosiah 7–11

Scripture Summary:

Ammon finds the land of Lehi-Nephi where Limbi is king—Limbi’s people are in bondage to the Lamanites—Limbi recounts their history—A prophet (Abinadi) had testified that Christ is the God and Father of all things—Those who sow filthiness reap the whirlwind, and those who put their trust in the Lord shall be delivered. [About 121 B.C.]

Ammon teaches the people of Limbi—He learns of the twenty-four Jaredite plates—Ancient records can be translated by seers—The gift of seership exceeds all others. [About 121 B.C.]

Zeniff leads a group from Zarabemla to possess the land of Lehi-Nephi—The Lamanite king permits them to inherit the land—There is war between the Lamanites and Zeniff’s people. [About 200—187 B.C.]

King Laman dies—His people are wild and ferocious and believe in false traditions—Zeniff and his people prevail against them. [About 178—160 B.C.]

King Noab rules in wickedness—He revels in riotous living with his wives and concubines—Abinadi prophesies that the people will be taken into bondage—His life is sought by King Noab. [Between 160 and 150 B.C.]

Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:

Searching for Relatives: Ammon and fifteen men who search for relatives is similar to Jews seeking out Jews wherever they might be in the world. Imagine the surprise of an entire nation of black Ethiopian Jews when white Jews discovered them just a few decades ago! “. . . this (Ethiopian) group refer to themselves as Beta Israel . . . They practice an early form of Judaism; the chief rabbis of Israel have recognized them as Jews. Until brought to Israel, they lived in the provinces around Lake Tana. According to their tradition, their ancestors were Jerusalem notables who came with Menelik, the son of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba . . .” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Being Found Brought Light and Knowledge: The absorption and integration of Ethiopian Jews into Israel’s society have some parallels with Ammon’s discovery of the people of Limhi. Limhi’s people had lost their identity and their covenant relationship to God. They lost their “seer.” Now, they were given a chance to get a “proper education” as they expressed their desire for pure light and knowledge once again. The late Prophet, John Taylor, once spoke of Light and Truth being names for the Urim and Thummim. Ammon speaks of the Urim and Thummim. “The . . . words ‘Urim’ and ‘Thummim’ . . . in the Greek and Latin translations of the Bible . . . were rendered as ‘revelation and truth’ or ‘teaching and truth’ and . . . gave rise to the incorporation of the Hebrew words *Urim ve-Thummim* on the official seal of Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Magen David (Star of David) Always Shown as Two Triangles: One possible explanation is that the two triangles represent a characterization of the Urim and Thummim. According to statements attributed to Joseph Smith, the Urim and Thummim were two triangular stones connected by a silver bow. One pointed up and the other pointed down. Superimposed they make a fascinating Magen David! According to a paper given at Hebrew University by John Tvedtnes, now Senior Researcher at FARMS (BYU), the words Urim and Thummim may come from Egyptian words similar to “RMMM” and “TMMM,” one meaning yes or act upon it (positive), the other a more negative meaning (leave it alone). Since the Urim and Thummim were revelatory tools, it is possible that they represent a procedure or operate on a simple principle of revelation with answers of yes or no. (Doctrine & Covenants 9:8)

Following Light Brings More Light: “. . . Abraham . . . was a man of God . . . a follower after righteousness . . . desired to obtain more righteousness . . . found that he had a right to the Priesthood . . . and when he obtained the Priesthood what did he do? . . . he kept seeking after more righteousness . . . sought the Lord diligently, and finally he had given unto him a Urim and Thummim, in which he was enabled to obtain a knowledge of many things that others were ignorant of . . .” (*Journal of Discourses, Vol.24, p.264 - p.265 - p.266, John Taylor, June 24th, 1883*)

Contrast of Following Good or Evil: It is a blessing to have righteous leaders, especially those called of God. The Book of Mormon chapters being examined this lesson show a contrast of leaders, righteous and unrighteous. In the Middle East, the followers of Islam, a religion started by Mohammed, are called Moslems. The word “Moslem” means a follower. Today, we can see how deeply ingrained their culture is in following – righteous and unrighteous leaders.

Gathering Information and Spying: Reading Zeniff, we can reflect on the importance of gathering information about those who choose to be our enemies. The tiny nation of Israel has many parallels to “spying” mentioned in

the Book of Mormon. One Israeli military leader, a skilled spy and archaeologist was Nelson Glueck. “Nelson Glueck was an important archaeologist and conducted excavations throughout Transjordan. In 1937 he uncovered the Nabatean Temple at Jebel el-Tannur, and in 1938 he began excavating the Iron Age site of Tell-el-Kheleifeh (Ezion-Geber), near Eilat. From 1952 onward he surveyed ancient sites in the Negev. As president of Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, Glueck opened branches of the college in New York, Los Angeles and Jerusalem. He wrote many articles in learned journals, and several important books on archaeology.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Another military leader, trained intelligence gatherer, statesman and archaeologist was Dr. Yigal Yadin. “When 16 years of age, Yadin joined the Haganah, Israel's pre-State defense force. As its operations and planning officer, he was responsible for drawing up and directing the operations of the War of Independence (1948). In 1949 he was appointed chief of staff, and in three years established the standing army, compulsory military service, and particularly the system of reserves. From 1952 Yadin devoted himself to archaeology, in 1956 receiving the Israel Prize for Jewish Studies for his research on one of the Dead Sea Scrolls. In his excavations at Hazor, a large Canaanite and Israelite city in Upper Galilee, he uncovered and explained, layer after layer, 21 levels of occupation, starting with the 27th century B.C.E., and including fortified cities mentioned in the Bible . . . he decoded scrolls found in the caves of the Judean Desert, and at Masada . . .” Yadin headed the Hebrew University's Institute of Archaeology from 1970 until 1977 when elected to the Knesset as representative of his newly formed Democratic Movement for Change. He served as a deputy prime minister for the Ninth Knesset and left politics, returning to academic life, in 1981.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Misinformation Brings Tragedy: Many tragic things that happened to the Jews came from misinformation about the Jews and their effort to keep together as a society. “In history, hostility towards the Jews has manifested itself in many different ways: violence against Jewish persons or property; expulsions from countries; legislation discriminating against Jews: and even attempts --- often successful --- to annihilate Jewish communities.” “Although the treatment accorded to the Jews in Islamic countries was generally a little better than in Christian countries, the Muslims could never forgive the Jews for not accepting Muhammad and their new faith. Jews were very definitely second-class citizens and suffered from a variety of disabilities. Special heavy taxes were levied on them and they were forbidden to engage in all kinds of occupations.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Anti-semitism Spawned by Misinformation: One of the tragic things that have happened to Arabs living around Israel is the amount of false information they have been given about the Jews. “In a sense, the unbelievable excesses of Nazism shocked the world for a while. People began to realize what anti-Semitism could lead to. But only for a while. Anti-Semitism began to rear its ugly head again, particularly in Soviet Russia under Stalin and, because of their conflict with the State of Israel, many Arab countries adopted anti-Semitic propaganda.”

“After the 1973 Yom Kippur War, some of the Arab states claimed that they would recognize the State of Israel if it would return all the territory it conquered in the 1967 Six Day War and if it would also acknowledge the rights of the Palestinian refugees. These latter are the people who fled Israel during the 1948 War of Independence. They settled in Arab lands, mainly Jordan and Lebanon, where they were not allowed to integrate into the population but were kept in refugee camps where they were fed vicious anti-Israel propaganda.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

History Repeats Itself: There are numerous parallels of the Book of Mormon peoples, the Nephites and the Lamanites and the Middle East peoples, the Jews and the Arabs.

Daniel Rona, born in Israel and living in Jerusalem has authored Old & New Testament and Book of Mormon Supplement Study Materials to be used in conjunction with the weekly LDS Gospel Doctrine Lesson study. NOTE: Three versions of the supplemental study materials are available *FREE* at www.HolyLandsRevealed.com. (Just click “LDS SUPPLEMENTS”)

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