

“They Taught with Power and Authority of God”

Lesson
25
Summary

Alma 17– 22

Scripture Summary: *The sons of Mosiah have the spirit of prophecy and of revelation—They go their several ways to declare the word to the Lamanites—Ammon goes to the land of Ishmael and becomes the servant of King Lamoni—Ammon saves the king’s flocks and slays his enemies at the waters of Sebus. [From about 91 to 77 B.C.]*

King Lamoni supposes that Ammon is the Great Spirit—Ammon teaches the king of the creation, of God’s dealings with men, and of the redemption that comes through Christ—Lamoni believes and falls to the earth as if dead. [About 90 B.C.]

Lamoni receives the light of everlasting life and sees the Redeemer—His household fall into a trance, and some see angels—Ammon is preserved miraculously—He baptizes many and establishes a church among them. [About 90 B.C.]

The Lord sends Ammon to Middoni to deliver his imprisoned brethren—Ammon and Lamoni meet Lamoni’s father, who is king over all the land—Ammon compels the old king to approve the release of his brethren. [About 90 B.C.]

Aaron teaches the Amalekites about Christ and his atonement—Aaron and his brethren are imprisoned in Middoni—After their deliverance they teach in the synagogues and make many converts—Lamoni grants religious freedom to the people in the land of Ishmael. [Between 90 and 77 B.C.]

Aaron teaches Lamoni’s father about the creation, the fall of Adam, and the plan of redemption through Christ—The king and all his household are converted—How the land was divided between the Nephites and the Lamanites. [Between 90 and 77 B.C.]

Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights: **Proselytizing and the Jews:** The chapters being considered in this lesson deal with proselytizing in a very genuine way. Proselytizing is an anathema to Jews and that is why proselytizing to Jews is considered part of “antisemitism.” Yet, one of the Hasidic groups of the Jews, the Habad, makes quite a “propaganda” effort to convert Jews (and others) to become more orthodox or actually convert to Judaism.

Be More Orthodox: “The uniqueness of Habad lies in the fact that it tries to reach other Jews and, if not to make ‘Habadniks’ out of them, at least to draw them a little closer to Orthodoxy. Habad representatives make regular visits to college campuses and military camps. They conduct a once-a-month kindergarten for a small number of Jewish children who live miles away from the nearest synagogue or Jewish school, and they will even send a *mobel* to circumcise a child on a remote Caribbean island.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Promoting Gathering: “Habad has developed a widespread network of schools, and it was the first Hasidic group to open yeshivot for the study of Torah and other religious subjects. They are also very active in attempting to help Russian Jews to emigrate to Israel. They run a strong ‘propaganda’ campaign and, in Jerusalem, the tourist visiting the Western Wall is likely to be approached by a Habad Hasid with a pair of *tefillin* in his hand, suggesting that he put them on then and there.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Service to Neighbors: Outside the realm of proselytizing, Israel as a nation, seeks opportunities to be of service to surrounding nations. Recent earthquakes in nearby Turkey and fires in neighboring Cyprus brought scores of Israelis with equipment to their rescue operations. Recent history also includes accounts of Israelis protecting the late King Hussein in neighboring Jordan from assassination attempts.

Ammon Serves: In the Book of Mormon’s accounts of rescues and unusual service, Ammon takes the opportunity afforded him because of his service to the king, to take the King back to the thing he believed (the great spirit) and then bring him forward to an understanding of who the “great spirit” was. We learn something of Ammon’s teaching skills, power and authority as he follows the spirit and takes the king back to the creation then forward to prophecies already fulfilled and still anticipated.

An Ammon-like Future for Israel? I would like to think that Ammon’s experience might be a parallel to what may eventually happen to the Jews in Israel. I also see the foundation of the kind of faith described in Ammon’s account in some of the people in Israel. I sense that, given a chance to stop and start again, many have the character to follow the Lord’s spirit and be part of miraculous experiences. Just look what they’ve already done without the gifts of spirit and priesthood in building a nation and restoring the land. Modern religious Jews are anticipating the return of prophets (Elijah, Moses, Joseph, and David - just to mention a few) to come with power and authority to restore the ancient kingdom, temple and covenant with God.

How Many Views of the Middle-East are a Pack of Lies? The challenges lie in the conflict of ideologies and ethnic misunderstandings of some that are widely echoed in media reports. The father of Lamoni was gripped with the rhetoric and even the “pack of lies” of his days. It created the animosity he felt. That kind of animosity exists in Israel, both with Arabs and Jews, fed by untruths that a few continue to propagate. In some instances, force needs to be used to stop the hatred that develops.

When Should Force be Used? At times, Ammon chose to show his beliefs through force, a force that had righteous intent. In each case, the force was necessary to protect property or to save someone. A look at modern Israel might be compared to these accounts. This could help in determining the length that Israel had to go to, or is going or might yet have to go to in fulfilling its God-given destiny.

Orson Hyde’s Prophetic View of Israel’s Destiny: “Thou, O Lord, did once move the heart of Cyrus to show favor unto Jerusalem and her children. Do Thou now also be pleased to inspire the hearts of kings and the powers of the earth to look with a friendly eye towards this place, and with a desire to see Thy righteous purposes executed in relation thereto. Let them know that it is Thy good pleasure to restore the kingdom unto Israel raise up Jerusalem as its capital, and constitute her people a distinct nation and government, with David Thy servant, even a descendant from the loins of ancient David to be their king.”

“Let that nation or that people who shall take an active part in behalf of Abraham's children, and in the raising up of Jerusalem, find favor in Thy sight. Let not their enemies prevail against them, neither let pestilence or famine overcome them, but let the glory of Israel overshadow them, and the power of the Highest protect them; while that nation or kingdom that will not serve Thee in this glorious work must perish, according to Thy word -- Yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted.” (*History of the Church, vol. 4, pp. 456-57.*)

Real Peace has Power and Authority: The connection to the past and its recall can often take us beyond our present narrow focus and get beyond our present concerns. Even in their fallen state and distant from their forefather’s connection to their homeland, they called a new city, Jerusalem, City of Shalom, City of Peace. Every time peace prevailed, it was as a result of righteous “power and authority.” And those that have it . . . quite naturally want to share it!

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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