

“Converted unto the Lord”

Lesson

26

Summary

Alma 23– 29

Scripture Summary:

Religious freedom is proclaimed—The Lamanites in seven lands and cities are converted—They call themselves Anti-Nephi-Lehies and are freed from the curse—The Amalekites and the Amulonites reject the truth.

The Lamanites come against the people of God—The Anti-Nephi-Lehies rejoice in Christ and are visited by angels—They choose to suffer death rather than to defend themselves—More Lamanites are converted.

Lamanite aggressions spread—The seed of the priests of Noah perish as Abinadi prophesied—Many Lamanites are converted and join the people of Anti-Nephi-Lehi—They believe in Christ and keep the law of Moses.

Ammon glories in the Lord—The faithful are strengthened by the Lord and are given knowledge—By faith men may bring thousands of souls unto repentance—God has all power and comprehendeth all things.

The Lord commands Ammon to lead the people of Anti-Nephi-Lehi to safety—Upon meeting Alma, Ammon’s joy exhausts his strength—The Nephites give them the land of Jersbon—They are called the people of Ammon. [Between 90 and 77 B.C.]

The Lamanites are defeated in a tremendous battle—Tens of thousands are slain—The wicked are consigned to a state of endless woe; the righteous attain a never-ending happiness. [About 76 B.C.]

Alma desires to cry repentance with angelic zeal—The Lord grants teachers for all nations—Alma glories in the Lord’s work and in the success of Ammon and his brethren. [About 76 B.C.]

Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:

Proclamations That Come from God: Book of Mormon proclamations affect Israel like others did. “. . . the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying . . . build (the Lord) an house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah . . .” (*2 Chronicles 36:22-23*) The Apostle, Orson Hyde, went to Europe with a proclamation for the Christians and the Jews to heed the restoration and recognize that the keys of the gathering of Israel had been restored to earth as they were given to the Prophet Joseph Smith. (*History of the Church, Vol.4, Ch.6, p.112-113*)

From Other Sources: Joseph Fielding Smith reminds us of a more recent proclamation, prompted by the spirit spreading after the keys of the gathering of Israel were restored. “The Balfour proclamation thus endorsed by the United States government brought great joy to thousands of downtrodden and persecuted Jews, and under the protection of Great Britain they commenced to gather in Palestine in great numbers, fulfilling partially the words of Isaiah . . .” (*Joseph Fielding Smith, The Restoration of All Things, p.151*)

Proclamations Can Have Blessings and Curses: The Apostle, Orson Hyde wrote, “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 . . . 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, Ch.26, p.457*)

Another blessing and curse were discovered in an archaeological excavation along the Dead Sea. Usually curses are not defined, but are mentioned often in Biblical and other Jewish writings. “Excavations in 1970 brought to light the remains of a Jewish community in the Byzantine period. Their synagogue had a beautiful mosaic floor depicting peacocks eating grapes, and the words ‘Peace on Israel,’ as well as a unique inscription consisting of 18 lines, part of which calls down a curse on ‘anyone causing a controversy between a man and his fellows or who slanders his friends before the gentiles or steals the property of his friends . . .’” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Refusing Military Activity: Some Israelis joke that Israel’s curse is its constant source of controversies. One growing controversy is about military involvement. As effective as Israel has been in the past in its military stewardship in maintaining its identity, there is a small but growing number of youth who object to serving in the military. Some of that may be laziness or inconvenience. However, there are some “conscientious objectors.” There may be a growing feeling to get to the turning of “swords to plowshares.”

“And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD’S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the

LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.” (*Isaiah 2:2-4*)

Refusing to Stop Fighting: Historically, in almost every part of the earth, for those who are angry and have a constant history of fighting, winning or losing made little difference. Once a battle or war would end, they would simply continue to fight someone else. They thrived on the “fighting” more than the “conquering” a particular enemy.

Man More Powerful than an Angel? Obviously, Alma saw the contrast between sorrow and peace. His wish that he could be an angel to bring more people to peace is poetic. Yet, in Jewish thought, man has more power than an angel! “. . . angels are assigned to countries, and thus there are angels who must not leave Erez Israel; angels walk upright and speak Hebrew; and they have no needs or free will. Man, because he does have free will and must conquer his evil inclination, is considered more important than the angels.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Boasting out of Place: Alma’s gratitude for the blessings of peace is almost like boasting; except, he acknowledges the power of God and not his own. He gives us a model to follow. “For although a man may have many revelations, and have power to do many mighty works, yet if he boasts in his own strength, and sets at naught the counsels of God, and follows after the dictates of his own will and carnal desires, he must fall and incur the vengeance of a just God upon him.” (*Doctrine & Covenants 3:4*)

Humility Opens the Soul: The opposite is a humility that opens the soul to the mysteries of God. A synonym for “mysteries” is the “subtle understanding” of God’s word. This is available through the “Gift of the Holy Ghost.” “For he that diligently seeketh shall find; and the mysteries of God shall be unfolded unto them, by the power of the Holy Ghost, as well in these times as in times of old, and as well in times of old as in times to come; wherefore, the course of the Lord is one eternal round.” (*1 Nephi 10:19*)

Historical Conflicts Overcome: As the Book of Mormon experiences relate, people with a history of conflict can and did become brothers and sisters. Unfortunately, today Israel is thought of as a nation of conflicting people. Yet, living in Israel, I can say that most Jews and Arabs get along with each other. There are Arabs and Jews that truly love each other. My own home teaching companion was Mohammed Al Shiabet from Bethlehem/BetSahour – an Arab and a Jew working for the Lord, in seeking the well being of his children! It is so similar to the Lamanite and Nephite account in the chapters we are studying.

Enemies Can Convert and be Protected: There is an interesting model for today in that a portion of land was given by the Nephites to the “Anti-Nephi-Lehites,” former Lamanites. Protection was also provided for them. The difference in Israel right now is that some Arabs who call themselves Palestinians have not converted nor have they committed to bury their weapons. Many Arabs and Jews in Israel are anxiously awaiting “proclamations” of peace, substantive proclamations that include a departure from fighting and using weapons to express their opinions.

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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