

“They Did Obey . . . Every Word of Command with Exactness”

Lesson
32
Summary

Alma 53 – 63

Scripture Summary: *The Lamanite prisoners are used to fortify the city Bountiful—Dissensions among the Nephites give rise to Lamanite victories—Helaman takes command of the two thousand stripling sons of the people of Ammon. [About 64 B.C.]*
Ammoron and Moroni negotiate for the exchange of prisoners—Moroni demands that the Lamanites withdraw and cease their murderous attacks—Ammoron demands that the Nephites lay down their arms and become subject to the Lamanites. [About 63 B.C.]
Moroni refuses to exchange prisoners—The Lamanite guards are enticed to become drunk, and the Nephite prisoners are freed—The city of Gid is taken without bloodshed. [About 63 B.C.]
Helaman sends an epistle to Moroni recounting the state of the war with the Lamanites—Antipus and Helaman gain a great victory over the Lamanites—Helaman’s two thousand stripling sons fight with miraculous power and none of them are slain. [About 66—62 B.C.]
Helaman recounts the taking of Antiparah and the surrender and later the defense of Cumeni—His Ammonite striplings fight valiantly and all are wounded, but none are slain—Gid reports the slaying and the escape of the Lamanite prisoners. [About 64—63 B.C.]
Helaman, Gid, and Teomner take the city of Manti by a stratagem—The Lamanites withdraw—The sons of the people of Ammon are preserved as they stand fast in defense of their liberty and faith. [About 63 B.C.]
Moroni asks Paboran to strengthen the forces of Helaman—The Lamanites take the city of Nephibah—Moroni is angry with the government.
Moroni complains to Paboran of the government’s neglect of the armies—The Lord suffers the righteous to be slain—The Nephites must use all of their power and means to deliver themselves from their enemies—Moroni threatens to fight against the government unless help is supplied to his armies.
Paboran tells Moroni of the insurrection and rebellion against the government—The king-men take Zarabemla and are in league with the Lamanites—Paboran asks for military aid against the rebels. [About 62 B.C.]
Moroni marches to the aid of Paboran in the land of Gideon—The king-men who refuse to defend their country are put to death—Paboran and Moroni retake Nephibah—Many Lamanites join the people of Ammon—Teancum slays Ammoron and is in turn slain—The Lamanites are driven from the land, and peace is established—Helaman returns to the ministry and builds up the Church. [About 62—57 B.C.]
Shiblon and later Helaman take possession of the sacred records—Many Nephites travel to the land northward—Hagoth builds ships, which sail forth in the west sea—Moronihah defeats the Lamanites in battle. [Between 56 and 53 B.C.]
Moroni commands the Lamanites to make a covenant of peace or be destroyed—Zerahemnah rejects the offer, and the battle resumes—Moroni’s armies defeat the Lamanites. [About 74—73 B.C.]
Helaman believes the words of Alma—Alma prophesies the destruction of the Nephites—He blesses and curses the land—Alma is taken up by the Spirit, even as Moses—Dissension grows in the Church. [73 B.C.]
Amalickiah conspires to be king—Moroni raises the title of liberty—He rallies the people to defend their religion—True believers are called Christians—A remnant of Joseph shall be preserved—Amalickiah and the dissenters flee to the land of Nephi—Those who will not support the cause of freedom are put to death. [Between 73 and 72 B.C.]
Amalickiah uses treachery, murder, and intrigue to become king of the Lamanites—The Nephite dissenters are more wicked and ferocious than the Lamanites.
Amalickiah incites the Lamanites against the Nephites—Moroni prepares his people to defend the cause of the Christians—He rejoiced in liberty and freedom and was a mighty man of God.
The invading Lamanites are unable to take the fortified cities of Ammonihah and Noab—Amalickiah curses God and swears to drink the blood of Moroni—Helaman and his brethren continue to strengthen the Church. [72 B.C.]
Moroni fortifies the lands of the Nephites—They build many new cities—Wars and destructions befell the Nephites in the days of their wickedness and abominations—Morianton and his dissenters are defeated by Teancum—Nephibah dies and his son Paboran fills the judgment-seat. [About 72—67 B.C.]
The king-men seek to change the law and set up a king—Paboran and the freemen are supported by the voice of the people—Moroni compels the king-men to defend their liberty or be put to death—Amalickiah and the Lamanites capture many fortified cities—Teancum repels the Lamanite invasion and slays Amalickiah in his tent. [About 67 B.C.]
Ammoron succeeds Amalickiah as king of the Lamanites—Moroni, Teancum, and Lehi lead the Nephites in a victorious war against the Lamanites—The city of Mulek is retaken, and Jacob the Lamanite is slain. [About 66—64 B.C.]

Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:

Spiritual “High Ground:” The fortification that Moroni built sound very familiar to a “Tel” in the Land of Israel. Both fortifications had sloping walls that were difficult to climb and exposed the enemy who had to fight “uphill.” Defense of the city was from the top downward. The spiritual connection to this physical description is to always stay on the high ground, a natural defense from below.

Love Your Enemies: In the Dead Sea Scrolls the Essenes, moved away from wickedness and established a singular community of righteousness. Their organization had a shadow of biblical organization. Their leader, the “Teacher of Righteousness” had two assistants. There was also a council of “Twelve Overseers.” They had an order following the ‘righteous king’ which is said in Hebrew, “Melech Zedek.” The Dead Sea sect shunned others, and probably evoked one of the Savior’s comments in the Sermon on the Mount. “Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you . . .” (*Matthew 5:43-46*) “The earliest

ethical teachings are commandments in the Bible: to do justice, to avoid bribery, gossip, robbery, oppression, to protect the weak --- the widow, the orphan, the slave, the stranger; to be kind to animals. Man is obliged to overcome his normal feelings and to obey these commands --- even with respect to his enemy." (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Eternal Binding Promises: The covenant made by the fathers of the "two-thousand stripling warriors" was so binding and sacred that, even in peril, Moroni did not let them assist in defense of their people. The concept of oaths and covenants reaches back to the Land of Israel and even before that to our very pre-existence. "Our very presence in this world is the result of a covenant we have made and a promise of and the result of faithfulness. Our baptism is a covenant in which the Lord promises us celestial life if we live celestial laws. To fail to do so we are cheating both him and us, but more especially ourselves. This is true also of other ordinances. We receive the higher priesthood with an oath and a covenant with the Father, which covenant 'He cannot break neither can it be moved,' but we may break it and fail, and in so doing we break a vow and are dishonest with ourselves and him. Our free agency permits our doing what we wish to do, but it does not immunize us from the results of our failures." (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, p.504*)

Oaths and Vows: "... each representing a different class of 'sworn statement.' The oath ... is limited to sworn statements ... (in) judicial proceedings, while the vow ... refers to all types of sworn statements made outside the courtroom." "Today in courts in most countries, it is common practice to 'swear in' all witnesses. Jewish law never adopted this custom, preferring to accept testimony without the administration of an oath, as long as there were at least two witnesses who corroborated each other's testimony, as well as other supportive evidence. Testimony given under oath was, in fact, considered to be a particularly weak ... only accepted when there was a complete lack of something better ... the judicial oath was administered, ... used in civil cases and then not to the witnesses but to the defendant, or less often, to the plaintiff. In capital cases, a judicial oath was never administered, since it was assumed that no one charged with a capital crime could be believed, even under oath." (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Value of a Vow: In contrast to the judicial oath, the 'vow' has very wide application. It consists of a fully verbalized statement made by an adult (not a minor) that he (or she) takes upon himself a specified obligation (such as giving a definite sum of money to charity) or that he denies to himself the enjoyment of a given object, person or experience (such as eating a particular type of food). If the vow is made voluntarily, without any compulsion from anyone else, it is fully binding, and only with great difficulty can it be declared void." "... The rabbis tolerated vows only when they were taken in order to get rid of bad habits and encourage one to do good; otherwise they emphasized that one should strive for the desired ends without the aid of vows." (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Negotiation or Compromise? As I read about the negotiations Moroni had with other Nephite and Lamanite leaders, I am struck with questions. When it comes time for negotiations, how much do we compromise? Where do we draw the line? Again, recent Israeli negotiations have drawn an entire nation (as well as other nations) into the same debate. It is clear to see that Moroni had the powerful gift of God, a prophetic gift that was used in righteousness to lead the people.

Jewish Hawaiians? The brief mention of Hagoth leading an entourage to another land brings a memory of my visit to a conference of ethnic Hawaiian Latter-day Saints. I had the opportunity of presenting a bridge between Judah and Joseph as I showed Jewish culture and tradition with Mormon similarities. The meeting was emotionally and spiritually fired as the Hawaiians showed their culture and tradition which reflected similarities to Jewish marriage, burial practices, greetings and dietary customs. This connected Hagoth, his Nephite and Lamanite linewith the history reaching back to the land of Israel.

Polynesian Ancestry Includes Book of Mormon People: This can be traced back at least to 1851, when George Q. Cannon taught it as a missionary in Hawaii (he was later a counselor in the First Presidency). President Brigham Young detailed the belief in a letter to King Kamehameha V in 1865. Other Church leaders have since affirmed the belief, some indicating that among Polynesian ancestors were the people of Hagoth, who set sail from Nephite lands in approximately 54 B.C. (cf. Alma 63:5-8). In a statement to the Maoris of New Zealand, for instance, President Joseph F. Smith said, 'I would like to say to you brethren and sisters ... you are some of Hagoth's people, and there is NO PERHAPS about it!' (Cole and Jensen, p. 388.) In the prayer offered at the dedication of the Hawaii Temple, President Heber J. Grant referred to the 'descendants of Lehi' in Hawaii (IE 23 [Feb. 1920]:283)." (*Encyclopedia of Mormonism, Vol.3, POLYNESIANS*)

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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