

June 22-28, 2020

Alma 17–22

“I WILL MAKE AN INSTRUMENT OF THEE”

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 Jewish and Holy Land Insights

What part of Judaism “evangelizes?”

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. “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 *mohel* to circumcise a child on a remote Caribbean island.” “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.)**

What is Israel’s equivalence to “preaching?”

Outside the realm of proselytizing, Israel as a nation, seeks opportunities to be of

service to surrounding nations. The soul-felt title for this is called “Tikun Olam,” (world healing). “Through various governmental organizations like MASHAV, Israel's Agency for International Development Cooperation, and non-governmental organizations, Israel has a long-standing tradition of coordinating relief to alleviate disease, hunger, and poverty. Starting 10 years after its founding, Israel adopted an official humanitarian aid agenda, providing vital relief to more than 140 countries. Among those countries receiving aid are nations that do not maintain diplomatic relations with Israel. Since 1959, Israeli doctors have been offering eye camps to treat ocular diseases to people throughout the developing world. In 1970 Israel started opening its doors to the world's refugees. It has saved non-Jewish people in distress and those seeking refuge from countries such as Lebanon, Egypt, Iran, Vietnam, Bosnia, Kosovo, Eritrea and Sudan. Since 1995 Israeli doctors acting through “SAVE A CHILD'S HEART” have been giving kids from around the world, including from the Palestinian Authority (PA), Iraq, Jordan and other Arab nations free life-saving heart operations. Since the organization first started 2,300 children have been treated, and almost half are from the PA, Jordan and Iraq.”

(https://mfa.gov.il/MFA/ForeignPolicy/Aid/Pages/Israel_humanitarian_aid.aspx)

How might a Jew view Ammon's service?

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. 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.

Where is the “fake media” in the Book of Mormon?

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. 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 through, or might yet have to visit in fulfilling its God-given destiny.

How does Latter-day prophecy view Israel and her people?

The Prophet Joseph Smith (1805-1844)

who officially organized the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on 6 April 1830, (Passover week, that year), taught that Latter-day Saints were actually descendants of the Twelve Tribes of Israel – specifically the tribe of Ephraim, and as such shared “Israelite ancestry with the Jews.” (Mauss, *All Abraham's Children*, 164; see also Rudolf Glanz, *Jew and Mormon: Historic Group Relations and Religious Outlook* (New York: Waldon Press, 1963), p 51-55) Smith said, “We [the house of Israel] are the favored people that God has made choice of to bring about the Latter-day glory; it is left for us to participate in and help to roll forward the Latter-day glory, the dispensation of the fulness of times, when God will gather together all things that are in heaven, and all things that are upon the earth,” “even in one,” when the Saints of God will be gathered in one from every nation, and kindred, and people, and tongue, when the Jews will be gathered together into one.” (Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, compiled by Joseph Fielding Smith, Jr. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1938), p 231)

What did Apostle Orson Hyde prophesy about serving the Jews?

“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.”

(October 24, 1841, *History of the Church*, vol. 4, pp. 456-57.)

How does “sharing” affect me?

The learning of and connection to the past and its recall and application to our times 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, the Jews called an old and ever new city, Jerusalem, City of Shalom, City of Peace. Every time peace prevailed, it was as a result of righteous “power and authority.” This, is preparation for the return of the Prince of Peace, and real salvation. Those that “see” it . . . want to “share” it, and are “evangelists!”