

May 6-12, 2024

## Mosiah 7–10

“IN THE STRENGTH OF THE LORD”

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**Summary:** *Mosiah 7. Ammon finds the land of Lehi-Nephi where Limhi is king—Limhi’s people are in bondage to the Lamanites—Limhi 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.]*

*Mosiah 8. Ammon teaches the people of Limhi—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.]*

*Mosiah 9. Zeniff leads a group from Zarahemla 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.]*

*Mosiah 10. 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.]*

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### Supplemental Jewish and Holy Land Insights

#### Where are my kinsfolks?

The chapter begins about an Ammon and his fifteen men

who search for relatives they knew about but did not know their whereabouts. I am struck with the similarity of Jews seeking out Jews wherever they might be in the world. Can you imagine just a few decades ago the surprise of black Jews in Africa when white Jews discovered them – an entire nation of black Ethiopian Jews? “In Ethiopia, members of this 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. Another theory says they form part of the original population and were converted to Judaism by south Arabian Jews.” ([Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.](#))

#### Black Jews?

“According to Ethiopian history, Judaism was widespread before the mass conversion of the population to Christianity. Beta Israel refused to convert, living under their own rulers, and remained faithful to Judaism, thereby suffering persecution. Jewish captives, brought by Ethiopian King *Kaleb* in 525, were settled among the Beta Israel, reinforcing the population practicing Judaism.” “From 1270, under the influence of the Christian church, the kings decided to put an end to their independence. Many were forced to convert, others were massacred or sold into slavery and their property seized. Throughout their persecution the Beta Israel proved their devotion to their religion.” “In the middle of the 19th century, the number of *Beta Israel* was estimated at 250,000. During the Italian occupation (1936-41), the *Beta Israel* were loyal to the Emperor Haile Selassie, then in refuge in Jerusalem. By 1993 almost all Beta Israel had left Ethiopia for Israel.” “Of all Diaspora Jewish

communities, none has undergone more dramatic change than the Beta Israel. Prior to 1977, all but a handful lived in Ethiopia. After the establishment of the State of Israel, the Jewish Agency took an interest in the welfare of the *Beta Israel* . . .” (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**) 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.

### **Who could use the *Urim* and *Thummim*?**

The late Prophet, John Taylor, once spoke of Light and Truth being names for the *Urim* and *Thummim*. They were some of the spiritual “tools” God gave to discern truth and verify revelation. Ammon speaks of the *Urim* and *Thummim*. “The first mention of the *Urim* and *Thummim* appears in the passage in Numbers which describes Moses’ transfer of his authority to Joshua prior to his death. Joshua is told by God, through Moses, that in his capacity as leader of the Israelites, ‘he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall inquire for him by the judgment of the *Urim* before the Lord.’ Much later, in the Book of Samuel, King Saul unsuccessfully sought information from the *Urim* and *Thummim* about the outcome of an impending battle with the Philistines, and his failure to receive any response led him to seek advice from the witch of En-Dor who conjured up for him the spirit of the dead prophet Samuel.” “It is not known exactly when the *Urim* and *Thummim* ceased to function, but the latest period for which there is evidence of their use is that of King David. Subsequently, oracles and predictions about future events were conveyed

exclusively by the prophets.” (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**)

### **What did the *Urim* and *Thummim* look like?**

“The exact meaning of the words ‘*Urim*’ and ‘*Thummim*’ have puzzled scholars over the generations. Both in the Greek and Latin translations of the Bible they were rendered as ‘revelation and truth’ or ‘teaching and truth’ and this understanding 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.**) There is, however, some enlightenment by closer examination. The *Magen David* (Star of David) is always shown as two triangles, interwoven. 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*!

### **What is the simplest use of the *Urim* and *Thummim*?**

According to a paper given at Hebrew University by the late John Tvedtnes, then 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, *no*, (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*. “But, behold, I say unto you, that you must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right, and if it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore, you shall feel

that it is right.” (**Doctrine & Covenants 9:8**)  
As a reminder, even though the *Magen David* is so prevalent in Jewish art and culture, the official symbol of the State of Israel is the seven-branched *Menorah* (candelabra).

### **What gift does a prophet use to guide me?**

From the Journal of Discourses, we found a statement by the Prophet, John Taylor, that adds some enlightening insights about light and perfection. “In the discourse read by Brother Reynolds, this morning, it says, among other things: ‘Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled.’ I also read with regard to Abraham: He was a man of God, and he tells us in his history that he was a follower after righteousness; that he desired to obtain more righteousness, and that upon examining into the history of his fathers, he found that he had a right to the Priesthood and sought ordination, and he received that ordination. He was ordained by Melchizedek, who was prince of Salem, and a servant of the Most High God, and held the Priesthood called after his name. It is the Priesthood which is after the order of the Son of God, a Priesthood which possesses the power of an endless life. Abraham received a knowledge of these things; and when he obtained the priesthood what did he do? Did he, after the manner of some religionists, ‘sing himself away to everlasting bliss?’ No, he did not. What then did he do? He kept seeking after more righteousness. Jesus recognized that principle in his sermon--‘Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled.’ Abraham 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. I think the meaning of the name of this instrument is

Light and Perfection, in other terms, communicating light perfectly, and intelligence perfectly, through a principle that God has ordained for that purpose. Did Abraham stop there? No; he did not rest until he could communicate with God Himself.” (**Journal of Discourses, Vol.24, p.264 - p.265 - p.266, John Taylor, June 24th, 1883**)

### **What type of leader do I follow?**

It is a blessing to have righteous leaders, especially those called of God. The Book of Mormon chapters being examined in 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. As we read of Zeniff, we can reflect on the importance of information, even 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.**)

### **Who is another Israeli scholar/statesman?**

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, an Assyrian citadel, and pagan temples. He decoded scrolls found in the caves of the Judean Desert, and at Masada threw new light on the second-century *Bar Kokhba* revolt against the Romans. He also found the rebels' *tefillin* (Jewish worship phylacteries for head and arm) intact and described them. Yadin headed the Hebrew University's Institute of Archaeology from 1970 until 1977 when elected to the *Knesset* (Parliament) 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.](#))

### **What contributes to Anti-Jewishness?**

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.](#))

### **Where did Anti-Semitism restart in modern times?**

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.](#)) In a very real sense, history repeats itself. There are numerous parallels of the Book of Mormon peoples, the Nephites and the Lamanites as compared to the Middle East peoples, Jews and the Arabs.