

**BM#17 "A Seer...Becometh A Great Benefit to His Fellow Beings"
Mosiah 7-11**

- I. Introduction
- II. Mosiah 7
- III. Mosiah 8
- IV. Mosiah 9
- V. Mosiah 10
- VI. Mosiah 11
- VII. Conclusions

I. Introduction

At the conclusion of the book of Omni, Amaleki wrote regarding a large number of people who wished to return to the land of Nephi. This was the land that Nephi and his company had occupied following his separation from his brothers, Laman and Lemuel.

The Book of Mormon Gospel Doctrine Teacher's manual states,

"About 400 years later [after the separation of Nephi from his brethren], the Nephites were [now] led by a king named Mosiah I. The Lord had commanded [him] to flee from the land of Nephi with 'as many as would hearken unto the voice of the Lord.' Mosiah I and his people discovered a group of people called the people of Zarahemla [This group were the Mulekites who had departed from Jerusalem in approximately 587 B.C.]. The two groups of people united and called themselves Nephites. Mosiah I was appointed to be their king (Omni 1:12-19)." (*Book of Mormon Gospel Doctrine Teacher's manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 76).

Now, according to Amaleki, a large group of King Mosiah I's people wanted "to return and possess the land of their inheritance" (Omni 1:27). However, disaster overcame them as a result of their leader "who being a strong and mighty man, and a stiffnecked man,...caused a contention among them; and they were all slain, save fifty, in the wilderness, and they returned again to Zarahemla" (Omni 1:28). This was not, however, to be the end of the group's desire to return, and once again "a considerable number...took their journey again into the wilderness...[and] Amaleki's brother also went with them: and [he] had not since known concerning them" (Omni 1:29-30).

II. Mosiah 7

Mosiah 7:1-2

1 And now, it came to pass that after king Mosiah had had continual peace for the space of three years, he was desirous to know concerning the people who went up to dwell in the land of Lehi-Nephi, or in the city of Lehi-Nephi; for his people had heard nothing from them from the time they left the land of Zarahemla; therefore, they wearied him with their teasings.

2 And it came to pass that king Messiah granted that sixteen of their strong men might go up to the land of Lehi-Nephi, to inquire concerning their brethren.

In lesson BM#15, through the writing of George Reynolds, we were introduced to this group of people, "who, moved by the spirit of unrest, were a source of perplexity to...king [Benjamin]. They were those who, having left the land of Nephi with the righteous, under the leadership of his father, Mosiah I, still permitted their thoughts and affections to be drawn towards their former homes and old associates." (*A Dictionary of the Book of Mormon*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1891, [1954], 65). The original group, as a result of contention, fought among themselves and all but fifty, who returned to Zarahemla, were killed. During the latter reign of King Benjamin, a second group, under the leadership of Zeniff, had again departed for the land of Nephi. This second group had not been heard of since their departure. It is this group that is being referenced in these verses and in response to the petition of the people, King Mosiah II determined to appoint "sixteen strong men" to travel to the land of Nephi and learn about those who had previously departed.

Mosiah 7:3-4

3 And it came to pass that on the morrow they started to go up, having with them one Ammon, he being a strong and mighty man, and a descendant of Zarahemla; and he was also their leader.

4 And now, they knew not the course they should travel in the wilderness to go up to the land of Lehi-Nephi; therefore they wandered many days in the wilderness, even forty days, did they wander.

Bryan Richards states,

"Although this small band wandered for a total of 40 days, the distance between the city of Zarahemla and the city of Lehi-Nephi could be traveled in 20 days This is how long it took Alma and his people to make the trek (see Mosiah 23:3; 24:25)." (www.gosepeldoctrine.com/contents/Mosaih-7).

In spite of not knowing "the course they should travel" (Mosiah 7:4), and wandering for forty days in the wilderness, they persevered. They sought to fulfill the responsibility they had been given by King Mosiah II and did not give up. Finally they arrived at a point where they could see the valley below and they pitched their tents. (see Mosiah 7:5.)

Mosiah 7:6-7

6 And Ammon took three of his brethren, and their names were Amaleki, Helem, and Hem, and they went down to the land of Nephi.

7 And behold, they met the king of the people who were in the land of Nephi, and in the land of Shilom; and they were surrounded by the king's guard, and were taken, and were bound and committed to prison.

For forty days they wandered in the wilderness and are now in prison, having been placed there by the king of the land. After having spent a couple of days in prison, Ammon and his brethren are brought before the king and their bands were loosed. They were commanded to answer the king's questions. (see Mosiah 7:7-8.)

Mosiah 7:9

9 And he [the king] said unto them; Behold, I am Limhi, the son of Noah, who was the son of Zeniff, who came up out of the land of Zarahemla to inherit this land, which was the land of their fathers, who was made a king by the voice of the people.

Zeniff, Limhi's grandfather, led the second group out of Zarahemla. Upon his death, his son, Noah, served as the king. Now Limhi was given the responsibility of serving as king. Accompanied by his guards, King Limhi was outside the city walls when Ammon and those with him approached.

Mosiah 7:11

11 And now, for this cause [curiosity?] have I suffered that ye should be preserved, that I might inquire of you, or else I should have cause that my guards should have put you to death. Ye are permitted to speak.

Whether it was curiosity or divine intervention, the lives of Ammon and his brethren were spared. Ammon is now given permission to speak.

Mosiah 7:12

12 And now, when Ammon saw that he was permitted to speak, he went forth and bowed himself before the king; and rising again he said: O king, I am very thankful before God this day that I am yet alive, and am permitted to speak; and I will endeavor to speak with boldness.

In humility and with respect for Limhi's office as king, Ammon introduces himself and tells him why he has come from Zarahemla to their land.

Mosiah 7:14-15

14 And now, it came to pass that after Limhi had heard the words of Ammon, he was exceedingly glad, and said: Now, I know of a surety that my brethren who were in the land of Zarahemla are yet alive. And now, I will rejoice, and on the morrow I will cause that my people shall rejoice also.

15 For behold, we are in bondage to the Lamanites, and are taxed with a tax which is grievous to be borne. And now, behold, our brethren will deliver us out of our bondage, or out of the hands of the Lamanites, and we will be their slaves; for it is better that we be slaves to the Nephites than to pay tribute to the king of the Lamanites.

Monte S. Nyman states,

"What is bondage? The dictionary relates it to servitude, slavery, or compulsion. Most people would think only of physical bondage, but bondage may be mental or social and in various aspects of all three of these areas..."

"Limhi's great joy was more than learning of the people in Zarahemla being alive (vv.13-14). As implied in the subsequent speech to his people, it was probably an answer to the king's prayers (vs.33). The king's willingness to be in bondage to the Nephites rather than the Lamanites reminds us of Jesus' parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32).

"Although the message of the parable is somewhat different, both Limhi and the wayward son recognized they were better off before transgression occurred (Mosiah 7:15)." (*The Book of Mormon Commentary, Vol.2*. Orem, Utah: Granite Publishing and Distribution L.L.C., 2003, 273-274).

King Limhi sends for the balance of Ammon's brethren and calls his people to assemble at the temple so that he might speak to them. (see Mosiah 7:17.)

Bryan Richards states,

"The temple in Lehi-Nephi is obviously different than the temple of Zarahemla where Benjamin delivered his sermon. The Book of Mormon records two other temples, the temple in the land of Nephi (2 Ne.5:16) and the temple in Bountiful (3 Nephi 11:1). It is possible that the temple spoken of in this verse is the same temple that Nephi built (2 Ne.5:16). However, that temple would have been about 450 years old." (www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Mosiah-7).

King Limhi tells his people that it will not be long before they "will no longer be in subjection to our enemies, notwithstanding our many struggles, which have been in vain; yet I trust there remaineth an effectual struggle to be made" (Mosiah 7:18). He continued by telling them to "put your trust in God, in that God who was the God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob; and also, that God who brought the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt, and caused that they should walk through the Red Sea on dry ground" (Mosiah 7:19). It is our witness to the world that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the same who led the children of Israel through the Red Sea, is Jehovah, who is Jesus Christ, acting under the direction of God, The Eternal Father. (see 1 Nephi 19:10.)

Mosiah 7:20

20 And again, that same God has brought our fathers out of the land of Jerusalem, and has kept and preserved his people even until now; and behold, it is because of our iniquities and abominations that he has brought us into bondage.

Monte S. Nyman states,

"Limhi [will identify] 'three reasons why his people were in bondage to the Lamanites. The first was that Zeniff...was overzealous to inherit the land of his fathers...(Mosiah 7:21). To be overzealous means to go beyond what is necessary..."

"The second cause...was transgression...As Joseph Smith taught: 'The moment we revolt at anything which comes from God, the devil takes power [TPJS, 181]..."

"Limhi's third cause of bondage was the Nephites slaying of the prophet Abinadi..."

"While other things may lead into bondage, these three causes outlined by King Limhi are typical reasons for any time period." ("Bondage and Deliverance," in *Studies in Scripture, Vol.7, 1 Nephi to Alma 29*. Edited by Kent P. Jackson. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1987, [Second Printing, 1988], 263-264).

Mosiah 7:29, 32

29 For behold, the Lord hath said: I will not succor my people in the day of their transgression; but I will hedge up their ways that they prosper not; and their doings shall be as a stumbling block before them.

32 And now, behold, the promise of the Lord is fulfilled, and ye are smitten and afflicted.

It was the direct result of the over-zealousness of Zeniff, to inherit the land of his fathers, that he was deceived by the King Laman of the Lamanities. The king now extracts one-half of all their crops and flocks and herds and even one-half of all they possess as tribute from the people of Lemhi, They had also lost battles with the Lamanites and

"their blood has been spilt in vain, and all because of iniquity" (see Mosiah 7:21-24.)

Bryan Richards states,

"Zeniff's desire to inherit the land of Lehi-Nephi was a classic case of the mentality which says, 'the grass is greener on the other side of the fence.' We could be critical of Zeniff, if we didn't behave in the same manner on such a regular basis. While Zeniff said, 'if I could live in the land of Lehi-Nephi,' we would have our own 'if only's. The spirit of eternal discontentment pervade the sin of covetousness, until, as in Zeniff's case, pursuing the object coveted often leads to harsh disappointment." (www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Mosiah-7).

Mosiah 7:25-26

25 For if this people had not fallen into transgression the Lord would not have suffered that this great evil should come upon them. But behold, they would not hearken unto his words; but there arose contentions among them, even so much that they did shed blood among themselves.

26 And a prophet of the Lord have they slain; yea, a chosen man of God, who told them of their wickedness and abominations, and prophesied of many things which are to come, yea, even the coming of Christ.

The prophet to whom Limhi refers to is Abinadi [Mosiah 12-17]. He was called by the Lord to call repentance to the people of King Noah, Limhi's father. He and his wicked priests were responsible for wickedness and abominations that had occurred among the people. It was for this purpose Abinadi was called to bear his witness to the people.

Mosiah 7:30-31

30 And again, he saith: If my people shall sow filthiness they shall reap the chaff thereof in the whirlwind; and the effect thereof is poison.

31 And again he saith: If my people shall sow filthiness they shall reap the east wind, which bringeth immediate destruction.

The meaning of the terms: people reap[ing] the chaff thereof in the whirlwind' and 'the east wind...which bringth immediate destruction,' are defined by McConkie and Parry.

Joseph Fielding McConkie and Donald W. Perry state,

"Anciently, threshers of grain understood well the art of separating the seed from the husks, or chaff. This simple matter was accomplished by tossing the grain in the air. By so doing, the valuable seed immediately returned to the threshing floor, and the slightest breeze would carry the worthless chaff away.

"So it is with the wicked. They are 'as chaff that is driven with the whirlwind out of the floor' (Hosea 13:3; Ps. 1:4; 35:5), or are 'led about by Satan, even as chaff is driven before the wind' (Mormon 5:18).

"East Wind. The east wind is a destructive wind which originates in the east, the symbolic direction of Deity's presence. Also called 'the wind of the Lord' (Hosea 13:15), it is 'prepared' by God (Jonah 4:8) for the purpose of destroying the ungodly and unrighteous." (*A Guide to Scriptural Symbols*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1990, [2nd Printing, 1992], 28, 48).

Mosiah 7:33

33 But if ye will turn to the Lord with full purpose of heart, and put your trust in him, and serve him with all diligence of mind, if ye do this, he will, according to his own will and pleasure, deliver you out of bondage.

Clyde J. Williams states,

"One of the main reasons for [Mormon] including Limhi's story in the Book of Mormon is for the lessons it teaches about bondage--the steps leading to it, its different types, what we must do to be delivered from it, and the different degrees of help the Lord gives us in dealing with it." ("Deliverance from Bondage," in *Mosiah: Salvation Only Through Christ, Vol.5*. Edited by Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate, Jr. Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1991, 261-262).

It is important for us to understand the factors that lead to bondage so we may recognize its symptoms while they are yet in their initial phase. Having done so, it warn us against their disastrous results and will help us to avoid these conditions.

III. Mosiah 8

As King Limhi finished his words to the people, he called upon Ammon to give them a report regarding the people in Zarahemla and all that had occurred since Zeniff's departure. After doing so, Ammon also shared with them the final words of King Benjamin and explained to them the important lessons. (see Mosiah 8:1-3.)

Following the return of his people to their homes, King Lemhi told Ammon about a record that had been found. It consisted of twenty-four plates. They had been discovered during an expedition to gain the assistance of their brethren in Zaramela to deliver them from bondage.

It is interesting to note that near the time the destruction of the people, according to a stone with engravings on it that had been brought to King Mosiah and he translated, a Jaredite survivor named Coriantumr had been discovered by the Mulekites/people of Zarahemla. He had lived with them for nine moons [months?]. (see Omni 1:20-21.) It is not until many years later when the people of Limhi find the plates that further information will become known regarding this people.

Mosiah 8:8-10

8 And they were lost in the wilderness for the space of many days, yet they were diligent, and found not the land of Zarahemla but returned to this land, having traveled in a land among many waters, having discovered a land which was covered with bones of men, and of beasts, and was also covered with ruins of buildings of every kind, having discovered a land which had been prepared with a people who were as numerous as the hosts of Israel.

9 And for a testimony that the things that had said are true they have brought twenty-four plates which are filled with engravings, and they are of pure gold.

10 And behold, also, they have brought breastplates, which are large, and they are of brass and of copper, and are perfectly sound.

These artifacts are the remains of the nation of the Jaredites. They also had come from across the sea, being led by the Lord. They had been living in Babel at the time of the building of the tower. The Lord had changed the language of the people due to their wickedness. Jared, a righteous man, had requested of his brother, he petition the Lord that their language not be changed. The Lord granted their request, and along with their close friends, had led them across the sea to ancient America. They arrived to the north of Lehi's original landing site. Their civilization lasted from approximately 2300 until 590 B.C., when wickedness brought about the destruction of their previously flourishing nation. It was Coriantumr, the last survivor of the Jaradite nation, who had previously lived with the Mulekites/people of Zarahemla.

When King Limhi learned the records were found, he was anxious for them to be translated so that they would "know the cause of their destruction" (Mosiah 8:12)

Mosiah 8:13-14

13 Now Ammon said unto him: I can assuredly tell thee, O king, of a man that can translate the records; for he has wherewith that he can look, and translate all the records that are of ancient date; and it is a gift from God. And the things are called interpreters, and no man can look in them except he be commanded, lest he should look for that he ought not and he should perish. And whosoever is commanded to look in the them, the same is called seer.

14 And behold, the king of the people who are in the land of Zarahemla is the man that is commanded to do these things, and who has this high gift from God.

Bryran Richards states,

"The interpreters are the Urim and Thummin that the Lord had given to the brother of Jared (Ether 3:23; 4:5). The brother of Jared wrote his vision of the inhabitants of the earth...The Lord knew that no subsequent people would be able to interpret [his] language without divine help. The Urim and Thummim were designed just for a seer like Mosiah [II]

to use to translate the record. Apparently, Mosiah II had received the interpreters which were had by the Kings. His grandfather, ...Mosiah I, had used them to translate the large stone of the Jaredites (Omni 1:20). The term used when describing translation with the Urim and Thummim is 'by the gift and power of God.' This is the way we describe the translation of the Book of Mormon, by the gift and power of God (Moroni's Title Page).

"The same Urim and Thummim spoken of in Mosiah 8:13 is the Urim and Thummin that was buried with the gold plates. It was the tool which Joseph Smith used to translate the Book of Mormon--especially early on. He described them as follows, there were two stones in silver bows--and these stones, fastened to a breastplate, constituted what is called the Urim and Thummim--deposited with the plates; and the possession and use of these stones were what constituted 'seers' in ancient or former times; and that God had prepared them for the purpose of translating the book. (History of Joseph Smith, Vol.1, 35). The Urim and Thummim was taken with the plates by Moroni after Joseph was done translating.

"There were at least [two] more Urim and Thummim because Abraham had one (PGP, Abraham 3:1), and Moses had one that was placed in the breastplate of judgment (Exodus 28:30)." (www.gosepeldoctrine.com/contentsts/Mosiah-8).

Mosiah 8:15

15 And the king said that a seer is a revelator and a prophet also; and a gift which is greater can no man have, except he should possess the power of God, which no man can; yet a man may have great power given him from God.

John A. Widtsoe states,

"A seer is one who sees with spiritual eyes. He perceives the meaning of that which seems obscure to others; therefore, he is an interpreter and clarifier of eternal truth. He foresees the future from the past and the present. This he does by the power of the Lord operating through him directly, or indirectly with the aid of divine instruments such as the Urim and Thummim. In short, he is one who sees, who walks in the Lord's light with open eyes." (*Evidences and Reconciliations, 3-in-1 Volume.*

Arranged by G. Homer Durham. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1960, [6th Printing, 1970], 258]

Today, in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, fifteen men which consist of the Prophet of the Church, his two Counselors and the Twelve Apostles, are sustained as Prophets, Seers, and Revelators. The Lord's Church is upon the earth today in its fullness.

Boyd K. Packer states,

"The scriptures speak of prophets as 'watch[men] upon the tower' who see 'the enemy while he [is] yet afar off' [D&C 101:54; see vs.45, 53-54; 2 Kgs. 9:17], and who have 'beheld also things which were not visible to the natural eye...[for] a seer hath the Lord raised up unto his people.' [Moses 6:36; Mosiah 8:15-17].

[Many years ago] the Brethren warned us of the disintegration of the family and told us to prepare...The weekly family home evening was introduced by the First Presidency...Parents are provided with excellent materials for teaching their children, with a promise that the faithful will be blessed.

"While the doctrines and revealed organization remain unchanged, all agencies of the Church have been reshaped in their relationship to one another and to the home...The entire curriculum of the Church was overhauled--based on scriptures. And years were spent preparing new editions of the Bible, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price.

"We can only imagine where we would be if we were just now reaching to [the] terrible redefinition of the family. But that is not the case. We are not casting frantically about, trying to decide what to do. We know what to do and what to teach...

"The course we follow is not of our own making. The plan of salvation, the great plan of happiness, was revealed to us, and the prophets and Apostles continue to receive revelation as the Church and its members stand in need of more." ("The Father and the Family," in *Ensign*, May 1994, 20).

Mosiah 8:19

19 And now, when Ammon had made an end of speaking these words the king rejoiced exceedingly, and gave thanks to God, saying: Doubtless a great mystery is contained within these plates, and these interpreters were doubtless prepared for the purpose of unfolding all such mysteries to the children of men.

Bryan Richards states,

"The great mystery contained on the 24 plates includes the Book of Ether. Moroni said, 'I take mine account from the twenty and four plates which were found by the people of Limhi, which is called the Book of Ether' (Ether 1:2). But Moroni abridged the record and did not include, [under the direction of the Lord], all of the prophecies of the brother of Jared." [see Ether 3:27.)
(www.gosepeldoctrine.com/contents/Mosiah-8).

As we later study the Book of Ether, we will find many mysteries that have been made known to those who humbly seek for the understanding.

IV. Mosiah 9

The next thirteen chapters of the Book of Mosiah, 9-22 inclusive, were inserted into the book of Mosiah by Mormon. They are taken from the records kept by Zeniff, continuing through his reign as well as Noah and Limhi. They begin with Zeniff's departure with the first group of people from Zarahemla, during the reign of King Benjamin. They represent a flash-back in history and fill in the events that occurred during their departure from Zarahemla to their return and following their deliverance from the hands of Lamanites during the reign of Limhi.

Mosiah 9:1

1 I, Zeniff, having been taught in all the language of the Nephites, and having had a knowledge of the land of Nephi, or of the land of our fathers' first inheritance, and having been sent as a spy among the Lamanites that I might spy out their forces, that our army might come upon them and destroy them--but when I saw that which was good among them I was desirous that they should not be destroyed.

Bryan Richards states,

"A few points deserve mention...Zeniff say *all the language of the Nephites* because there was more than one language. They spoke a form of Hebrew, wrote in reformed Egyptian, and joined with the Mulekites who spoke an entirely different language...It is interesting that chapter 9 and 10 are written in the first person. This means that Mormon wrote the story of Zeniff verbatim without abridgement or editorializing. As soon as his son Noah takes charge, Mormon begins to abridge the record and the rest of the story is told in third person."

www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Mosiah-9).

It was Zeniff's desire to spare the lives of the Lamanites and to make a treaty with them, however, their leader was against this option. Contention broke out and there was a battle between the two contenting groups. The result was that only fifty survived and the group then returned to Zarahamla. (see Mosiah 9:2.)

Mosiah 9:3

3 And yet, I being over-zealous to inherit the land of our fathers, collected as many as were desirous to go up to possess the land, and started again on our journey into the wilderness to go up to the land; but we were smitten with famine and sore afflictions; for we were slow to remember the Lord our God.

Zeniff, despite the previous bloodshed, was determined to return to the land of their inheritance. Being over-zealous, meaning to go beyond what is necessary (Nyman, "Bondage and Deliverance," 263), he is was "slow to remember the Lord our God." These qualities resulted in the company being "smitten with famine and sore afflictions" (Mosiah 9:3). Famine and affliction are common ways the Lord uses in order to humble his people.

Finally, after wandering, Zeniff and four of his men, go into the city of the Lamanities. Upon meeting with the king, he agreed to give them the land of Lehi-Nephi and the land of Shilom. He had his people leave the area and Zeniff and his company were given the land. Initially, they repaired the buildings including the walls of the city of

Lehi-Neph, and Shilom. They also planted the ground with seeds and began raising crops. (see Mosiah 9:4-9.)

Mosiah 9:10

10 Now it was the cunning and the craftiness of king Laman, to bring my people into bondage, that he yielded up the land that we might possess it.

Why did Zeniff not recognize the potential for deception and deceit by the Lamanite king? It appears that Zeniff's zeal and determination to again obtain the land of their forefathers was so great that it clouded his judgment. Surely, he did not really believe that a ruler would have his own people displaced so a former enemy could gain land close by their own cities without seeking some compensation for the property they controlled? One must also believe that he had not consulted the Lord regarding this proposition, unless he did and then ignored the Lord's counsel. This trait may not be entirely unknown to those of us who sometimes "want what we want, no matter what."

Mosiah 9:11-13

11 Therefore it came to pass, that after we had dwelt in the land for the space of twelve years that king Laman began to grow uneasy, lest by any means my people should wax strong in the land, and that they could not overpower them and bring them into bondage. 12 Now they were a lazy and an idolatrous people; therefore they were desirous to bring us into bondage, that they might glut themselves with the labors of our hands; yea, that they might feast themselves upon the flocks of our fields. 13 Therefore it came to pass that king Laman began to stir up his people that they should contend with my people; therefore there began to be wars and contentions in the land.

It appears that Zeniff now realized that the king who gave him and his company the desired land, was only an effort on the king's part to bring them into bondage. The subtlety of the Lamanite king is reminiscent of the subtle manner in which the devil and his minions operate in order to bring us into bondage. One common method is to promise an individual something for nothing. Once the individual has become use to the benefit of the object i.e. relaxed

feeling, release of stress, physical high such as from alcohol, cigarettes, marijuana, even pornography; they come to learn that it is harmful and also addictive. They are now hooked. In order to end their dependency, it will require a great amount of effort and cost on their part in order to become clean. Some will choose to deny the harm and continue to use the substance, telling themselves that they can quit when they want. Others make the determine to seek help. Few, like Zeniff, considered the cost when they first began their adventure.

Mosiah 9:16-17

16 And it came to pass that I did arm them with bows, and with arrows, with swords, and with cimeters, and with clubs, and with slings, and with all manner of weapons which we could invent, and I and my people did go forth against the Lamanites to battle.

17 Yea, in the strength of the Lord did we go forth to battle against the Lamanites; for I and my people did cry mightily to the Lord that he would deliver us out of the hands of our enemies, for we were awakened to a remembrance of the deliverance of our fathers.

Despite the fact that the people of Zeniff had previously wars and contentions with the Lamanites, this time the battle was different. They were now awakened to their dependence upon the Lord and turned to him for strength and deliverance.

Mosiah 9:18-19

18 And God did hear our cries and did answer our prayers; and...in one day and a night we did slay three thousand and forty-three; we did slay them even until we had driven them out of our land.

19 And I, myself, with mine own hands, did help bury their [our?] dead. And behold, to our great sorrow and lamentation, two hundred and seventy-nine of our brethren were slain.

Three thousand and forty-three Lamanites lost their lives, compared to 279 Nephites. While each life is important to God, rather than facing defeat and potential bondage, the Nephites had, for now, learned their lesson, and broken the bondage the Lamanites sought to inflict upon them.

V. Mosiah 10

Mosiah 10:3, 5

3 And it came to pass that we did inherit the land of our fathers for many years, yea, for the space of twenty and two years.

5 ...and thus we did have continual peace in the land for the space of twenty and two years.

Bryan Richards states,

"In the first 22 years of Zeniff's reign. it appears that he had only one battle with the Lamanites (Mosiah 9:17). His tone in chapters 9 and 10 is guarded because he sees the future of his people--they are likely to suffer many more battles because of the hatred of the Lamanites...[He came to learn despite his rocky beginning] that in order to win battles, the people had to call upon the Lord to deliver them from their enemies. The unfortunate legacy of Zeniff's life is that he leaves his people in a precarious position--surrounded by Lamanites. Worse than this, he confers the kingdom on his wicked son, Noah. The combination of these two factors spells doom for his people." (www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Mosiah-10).

Mosiah 10:6

6 And it came to pass tht king Laman died, and his son began to reign in his stead. And he began to stir his people up in rebellion against my people; therefore they began to prepare for war, and to come up to battle against my people.

We learn that the Lananites prepared for war fully armed; "their heads shaved" and girded with a leathern girdle about their loins" (Mosiah 10:8).

The Nephites prepared for war by hiding their "women and children...in the wilderness;" all men who could bear arms including "the old...and young men" were placed "in their ranks, every man according to his age" (Mosiah 10:9). Even Zeniff, "in my old age, did go up to battle" and "we did go up in the strength of the Lord" (Mosiah 10:10).

Mosiah 10:11-12

11 Now the Lamanites knew nothing concerning the Lord, nor the strength of the Lord, therefore they depended upon their own strength..

12 They were a wild, and ferocious, and a blood-thirsty people, believing in the tradition of their fathers...

Because "the Lamanites knew nothing concerning the Lord...they depended upon their own strength...[and] the traditions of their fathers" (Mosiah 10:11-12).

With their separation from their brother Nephi, Laman and Lemuel lost their access to the scriptures and a knowledge of God. As a result, the only source to whom they had to turn in peace or war was their own brute strength enflamed by the traditions of their fathers which was based upon falsehood. Their traditions included: (1) "They were driven out of land of Jerusalem because of the iniquities of their father; (2) "They were wronged in the wilderness; (3) "They were also wronged while crossing the sea; and, (4) "They were wronged while in the land of their first inheritance" (Mosiah 10:12-13).

They believe Nephi was more favored: (1) As "the Lord heard his prayers and answered them [but not theirs]; (2) [Thus] "They had hardened their hearts against him on the waters [when he had called them to repentance]; (3) And "He had taken the ruling of the people out of their hands; and they wanted to kill him" [as the oldest they should be the rulers] and, (4) Because, He "took the records which were engraven on the plates of brass, for [which] they said that he robbed them" (Mosiah 10:13-16).

In the final analysis, it is true. Nephi "was more faithful in keeping the commandments of the Lord—therefore, he was more favored of the Lord than they" (Mosiah 10:13), [and] "because they understood not the dealings of the Lord" (Mosiah 10:14), their resentment towards him grew until they were prepared to commit homicide against their own brother! Had they also been willing to keep the commandments of the Lord and to follow his counsel and direction, they too would have been blessed by the Lord.

Mosiah 10:17

17 And thus they have taught their children that they should hate them, and that should murder them, and that they should rob and plunder them, and do all they could to destroy them; therefore they have an eternal hatred towards the children of Nephi.

18 For this very cause has king Laman, by his cunning, and lying craftiness, and his fair promises, deceived me, that I have brought this my people up into this land, that they may destroy them; yea, and we have suffered these many years in the land.

Zeniff had forgotten that returning with the second group was his idea. He was determined to return to the land of Lehi-Nephi. It was also he who had entered into an agreement with King Laman to possess the land of Lehi-Nephi and the land of Shilom, seemingly without compensation on the part of Zeniff. All their suffering cannot be blamed on King Laman.

Mosiah 10:19

19 And now I, Zeniff, after having told all these things unto my people concerning the Lamanites, I did stimulate them to go to battle with their might, putting their trust in the Lord; therefore, we did contend with them, face to face.

20 And it came to pass that we did drive them again out of our land; and we slew them with great slaughter, even so many that we did not number them.

It appears that Zeniff and his people had humbled themselves sufficiently that the Lord did bless them in battle. Once again peace was restored to the land. I believe that often the Lord blesses us way beyond what we deserve. He is merciful to us and anxious to bless us if we will only turn our hearts to Him and obey his commandments.

Mosiah 10:22

22 And now I, being old, did confer the kingdom upon one of my sons; therefore I say no more. And may the Lord bless my people. Amen.

Zeniff had tried to rule his people in righteous, despite a rocky beginning. His people had enjoyed many years of peace during his reign and had come to remember and trust in the Lord to bless them.

VI. Mosiah 11

Bryan Richards states,

"[Chapter 11] begins with a change from the unabridged record of Zeniff to Mormon's abridgement of the record of Noah. Until the reign of Abinadi, Mormon has nothing good to write about--just the wickedness of Noah, his extravagance as king, and the wickedness of his priests.

"King Noah deserves the dubious distinction of being the most wicked king in Nephite history. He taxes his people more than his predecessors, he encourages riotous living, becomes a wine-bibber, establishes the practice of polygamy and concubines to satisfy his lustful heart, turns his people from the Lord, fails to adequately protect them from the Lamanites, has the prophet Abinadi burned at the stake, and finally, while fleeing from a Lamanite army, suggest that the men abandon the women and children and run for their lives (Mosiah 19:11). He is the best example of the adage, when the wicked rule, the people mourn (D&C 98:9)." (www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Mosiah-11).

One might wonder, as we address the reign of king Noah and his wickedness, why Mormon chose to include so much wickedness and depravity on the plates? It is true we must, as Father Lehi taught, learn that there is opposition in all things so that we may have the opportunity to choose between the good and the evil that exists in the world. (see 2 Nephi 2:11, 27). Another lesson, I believe, important for each of us to learn is that despite the wickedness in the world around us, there are those today, who if they are taught and then embrace the truth, with the help of the Lord, can rise above the wickedness and depravity that exists and become righteous. This lesson is clearly illustrated in the impact of Abinadi's teaching upon young Alma, who was then serving as one of Noah's wicked priests. If this is the only lesson we glean from these chapters, and I believe it is not, we will be well paid for our efforts.

Mosiah 11:1

1 And now it came to pass that Zeniff conferred the kingdom upon Noah, one of his sons; therefore Noah began to reign in his stead; and he did not walk in the ways of his father.

Unfortunately, the son on whom Zeniff conferred his kingdom was Noah and his unrighteousness almost destroyed the people. Nor did Zeniff's people remember the blessings they had received from the Lord during Zeniff's reign. Instead, they chose to follow the wicked example of their king and his appointed priests.

Mosiah 11:2

2 For behold, he did not keep the commandments of God, but he did walk after the desires of his own heart. And he had many wives and concubines. And he did cause his people to commit sin, and do that which was abominable in the sight of the Lord. Yea, and they did commit whoredoms and all manner of wickedness.

King Noah did not keep the commandments of God himself, but instead followed "the desires of his own heart." Governed only by his own carnal and lustful desires, he became his own judge, guided by Satans impressions, in determining right or wrong. This included giving full license to his sexual appetite by instituting or approving all men having "many wives and concubines."

Kathryn Jenkins Gordon states,

"In times when the Lord approves it, *concubines* are 'secondary wives' who, while married, are not equal in privileges to other wives in the caste system but are not a violation of the law of chasity. In the time of King Noah, *concubines* refers to the practice of living with more than one woman in or out of marriage without God's approval. *Whoredoms* refer to any perversion of the law of chasity." (*Scripture Study Made Simple: The Book of Mormon*. American Fork, Utah: Covenant Communications, Inc., 2015, 194).

Mosiah 11:3-4

3 And he laid a tax of one fifth part of all they possessed,...

4 And all this did he take to support himself, and his wives and his concubines; and also his priests, and their wives and their concubines; thus he had changed the affairs of the kingdom.

It takes lots of money to support an extravagant lifestyle not only for yourself but those who follow your desires. As the King and his entourage did not work, it was incumbent upon his people to support them through increased taxes.

Mosiah 11:5

5 For he put down all the priests that had been consecrated by his father, and consecrated new ones in their stead, such as were lifted up in the pride of their hearts.

Because God does not figure in his lifestyle, King Noah as the supreme authority in church and state, dismisses those who served, and replaced them with those who would do his own bidding.

Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet state,

"The priests of Noah were corrupt and their priesthood one of defilement and debauchery. Of interest, but unclear in the Book of Mormon, is what authority if any the priests had who were consecrated by Zeniff. Assuming Zeniff to have been properly ordained, it may well be that Alma traced his authority to this source. (see Mosiah 18:18.)" (*Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon, Vol.2*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988, [4th Printing, 1992], 200).

Mosiah 11:6-7

6 Yea, and thus they were supported in their laziness, and in their idolatry, and in their whoredoms, by the taxes which king Noah had put upon his people; thus did the people labor exceedingly to support iniquity.

7 Yea, and they [the people] also became idolatrous, because they were deceived by the vain and flattering words of the king and priests; for they did speak flattering things unto them.

Bruce R. McConkie states,

"Pagans and other frequently worship graven images, or idols of wood, stone, or metal.

"Akin to the most obvious types of *idolatry* is the worship of money, power, worldly learning, the gratification of lust, and the like." (*Mormon Doctrine*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966, [Second Edition, 1966], 374).

It is likely that within the permissive atmosphere the king and his priests had created, many of the people were also guilty of the same sins and transgressions so prevalent among their leaders.

The King during this time also built "many elegant and spacious buildings" including "a spacious palace and a throne in the midst thereof." He also built seats for his "high priests ornament[ed] with pure gold" (Mosiah 11:8-11.)

He also built a "high tower near the temple" overlooking the lands possessed by the Lamanites. He caused many buildings to also be built in the land of Shilom. (see Mosiah 11:12-13.)

Mosiah 11:14-15

14 And it came to pass that he placed his heart upon his riches, and he spent his time in riotous living with his wives and his concubines, and so did also his priests spend their time with harlots.

15 And it came to pass that he planted vineyards round about in the land; and he built wine-presses, and made wine in abundance; and therefore he became a wine-bibber and also his people.

The ready access to alcohol and its numbing effect upon inhabitants would have only added to an atmosphere that was already ripe for physical and spiritual destruction. In addition, when the Lamanites began to come upon them and to drive out their flocks, and the Nephite army was able to defeat them, the soldiers came home boasting of their strength saying, "that their fifty could stand against thousands of the Lamanites...and did delight in blood and the shedding of the blood of their brethren..." (Mosiah 11:19).

Mosiah 11:20-23

20 And it came to pass that there was a man among them whose name was Abinadi; and he went forth among them, and began to prophesy, saying: Behold, thus saith the Lord, and thus hath he commanded me, saying, Go forth, and say unto this people, thus saith the Lord--Wo be unto this people, for I have seen their abominations, and their wickedness, and their whoredoms; and except they repent I will visit them in mine anger.

21 And except they repent and turn to the Lord their God, behold, I will deliver them into the hands of their enemies; yea, and they shall be brought into bondage; and they shall be afflicted by the hand of their enemies.

22 And it shall come to pass that they shall know that I am the Lord their God, and am a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of my people.

23 And it shall come to pass that except this people repent and turn unto the Lord their God, they shall be brought into bondage; and now shall deliver them, except it be the Lord the Almighty God.

While it is doubtful that King Noah fully understood the words of God spoken through his prophet, Abinadi, it is important that we understand the lesson that God is teaching his wayward king and people. The lesson, as I understand it, is: As my children, you are free to choose to remove me from your lives and to act in opposition to my commandments, but the time will come when I will hold you accountable for your choices. I will warn you, prior to passing judgment upon you, but if you choose to ignore the warning of my servants, you will suffer for your iniquity. While you are free to make choices, you are not free from experiencing the consequences of your choices. In this instance, the consequence of their ignoring will be two-fold. First, "they shall be brought into bondage" (Mosiah 11:23).

Mosiah 11: 24-25

24 Yea, and it shall come to pass that when they shall cry unto me I will be slow to hear their cries; yea, and I will suffer them that they be smitten by their enemies.

25 And except they repent in sackcloth and ashes, and cry mightily to the Lord their God, I will not hear

their prayers, neither will I deliver them out of their afflictions; and thus saith the Lord, and thus hath he commanded me.

Secondly, the Lord will be slow to hear their cries and, while in bondage, they will be smitten by their enemies.

Mosiah 11:26

26 Now it came to pass that when Abinadi had spoken these words unto them they were wroth [angry] with him and sought to take away his life; but the Lord delivered him out of their hands.

At the conclusion of Abinadi's words to the people, they wanted to put his to death. It is a common response of those who are called to repentance by a servant of the Lord to be angry with the message. The anger may find expression through the denial of their actions or by finding some way of deflecting the warning to include some fault within the servant himself. This may include, He is not perfect; Who is he to judge my actions?; I'm not so bad, others are doing worse things; Why did he seek me out? In extreme situations, the individual/people desire to take the life of the messenger as in the case with Abinadi. Laman and Lemuel had also reached this point in their relationship with their brother, Nephi. (see 2 Nephi 5:4.)

Mosiah 11:27-28

**27 Now when king Noah had heard of the words which Abinadi had spoken unto the people, he was also wroth; and he said: Who is Abinadi, that I and my people should be judged of him, or who is the Lord, that shall bring upon my people such great affliction?
28 I command you to bring Abinadi hither, that I may slay him, for he has said these things that he might stir up my people to anger one with another, and to raise contentions among my people; therefore I will slay him.**

King Noah is enraged. He is the sole judge of his behavior and that of his people. He does not even recognize the Lord, never mind attributing him any power. Bring Abinadi to him and he will dispose of him.

Mosiah 11:29

29 Now the eyes of the people were blinded; therefore they hardened their hearts against the words of Abinadi, and they sought from that time forward to take him [put him to death]. And king Noah hardened his heart against the word of the Lord, and he did not repent of his evil doings.

King Noah, like the Pharaoh of Egypt, who when confronted by Moses and Aaron, also denied knowing the Lord (Exodus 5:2), and according to the Joseph Smith Translation, also hardened his heart against the word of the Lord as given to him by the Lord's servants (JST, Exodus 7:13). In the end, he came to know the Lord and the power that He exercises over his wayward children. (see Exodus 12:31.)

VII. Conclusions

As we conclude this lesson, we have been rewarded for our continued efforts to read the Book of Mormon. There are many lessons we can learn that will serve to bless our lives and help us to avoid the pitfalls of those who preceded us.

In Mosiah, Chapter 7, we learned of the consequences that having an overzealous leader can bring to a people. Overzealous means "to go beyond what is necessary" (Nyman, "Bondage and Deliverance," *Studies in Scripture, Vol. 7*. 263). It can also refer to being stubborn and unwilling to heed counsel. When our desire become more important than anything else, we are headed for trouble. In the case of Zeniff's people, it led to them being brought into bondage. We also learned three reasons why this occurred. A major factor was transgression and "being slow to remember the Lord" (Mosiah 9:3).

In Mosiah, Chapter 8, we learned about the Jaredite nation. An expedition party sent out by the people of Limhi found the former ruins of this nation as well as 24 gold plates. These plates were translated by Mosiah II. Later they were abridged by Moroni and included in the Book of Mormon as the Book of Ether. These plates could only be translated by a Seer of the Lord and King Mosiah II held these keys. Today, they are also held by fifteen men who are sustained in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints as Prophets, Seers, and Revelators.

In Mosiah, Chapter 9, we began to read from the record of Zeniff. Chapters 9-22, will give us an increased understanding of what occurred to the people of Zeniff following their departure from Zarahemla under his leadership. Once again we saw the effects of Zeniff being overzealous in dealing with King Laman of the Lamanities. Fortunately, the people of Zeniff were able to learn from their mistakes and peace was established.

In Mosiah, Chapter 10, we came to a greater understanding of the traditions the Lamanites held. We also saw how, after all these years, they continued to feel that they had been wronged by Nephi and had an extreme hatred toward the Nephites. Prior to Zeniff's death, he chose his son, Noah, to succeed him as the king.

In Mosiah, Chapter 11, we learn how a wicked king can have a devastating effect upon their people. Their example can be interpreted by some of the people as permission to engage in wicked and sinful behavior. We learned that one may choose to reject God and his commandments, but they are not, either as individuals or as a nation, exempt from the consequences of their choices. God called a prophet named Abinadi to call the king and his people to repentance. If they ignored his warning, they would then suffer dire circumstances.

In our next lesson [BM#18], we will address Abinadi's message to the king and his people and their reaction to his message.