



Type: Magazine Article

Lesser Lights of the Book of Mormon: Jarom and Zoram

Author(s): George Reynolds

Source: *The Latter-Day Saints' Millennial Star*, Vol. 81, No. 26 (26 June 1919)

Published by: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Page(s): 411–414

Abstract: In this article, Reynolds describes the Nephite people of Jarom's time. Zoram was the commander of the Nephite armies around 81 B.C. He led the Nephites to free Nephite prisoners.

Bravely spoken, sister! Such testimonies are not uttered lightly, they will be magnified by the unseen powers of heaven to the advancement of the Lord's work upon the earth, and those, such as you, that bear them shall in no wise lose their reward. God has said it, and His promise cannot fail.

J. F. W.

LESSER LIGHTS OF THE BOOK OF MORMON.

JAROM.

THE days of the prophet Jarom on the earth were neither few nor unimportant. During the sixty years that he was custodian of the holy things (B. C. 422 to B. C. 362) the Nephites may be said to have grown from a powerful tribe to a wealthy, though not as yet very numerous nation; indeed, their numbers were far from being equal to those of the wild and bloodthirsty Lamanites. These, like their modern representatives, occupied their time almost exclusively in the chase of wild animals and in war; yet, notwithstanding their vigorous and repeated onslaughts, the age of Jarom was to the Nephites one of great progressiveness in the arts of peace. In the pleasant and productive region in which they had established themselves, to which they had given the name of The Land of Nephi, the rude battle with nature for the necessities of life had resulted in victory, and they had now leisure to turn their attention to the creation of the comforts and embellishments of a more refined civilization. They ceased to be distinctively a pastoral people; they gave much attention to the embellishment of their homes and public buildings with fine and curious workmanship in wood and metal; whilst agriculture and manufacture received a new impetus by the invention of numerous labor-saving machines, implements and tools. Their safety from successful attack from their Lamanitish foes was also measurably secured by the introduction of more perfect weapons of war, and the development of a rude system of fortification, sufficient, however, to protect their cities and settlements from the means of attack at the command of the children of Laman.

Their semi-tropical home was not only rich agriculturally, but its mountains were stored with the precious things of the earth—gems, gold, silver, copper, iron, etc., whilst the vast forests yielded timber of every kind necessary for the development of their manufacturing interests. It is well to bear in mind that though the Nephites of this age were stiffnecked and perverse, requiring the constant warnings of prophets to keep them from backsliding into faithlessness; yet the pervading tone of their society was simple and unaffected, and the people were very generally industrious, honest and moral. They neither blasphemed nor profaned the holy name of the Deity, they kept sacred the Sabbath day, and vigorously observed the requirements of the law of Moses. Their

prophets, priests and teachers not only instructed them in this law, but they also expounded the intent for which it was given; and whilst so doing directed their minds in faith to the coming of the Messiah, in whom they taught the people to believe as though he had already tabernacled in the flesh. These pointed and constant teachings preserved the people from destruction, by softening their hearts and bringing them to repentance, when war, wealth or pride exerted their baneful influences and began to turn their affections from the service of heaven.

Of Jarom himself we can say but little, for but little he tells us of his personal history. He does not write the words of his prophecies or revelations, for the reason that he does not esteem them of worth to posterity, as they added nothing to the knowledge of the plan of salvation revealed through his forefathers, Lehi, Jacob and Enos. As the Church historian, he was undoubtedly a leader among his people, and in a general way he summarizes the character of his class by saying: "Our kings and our leaders were mighty men in the faith of the Lord; and they taught the people the ways of the Lord." A little further on he states: "The prophets of the Lord did threaten the people of Nephi, according to the word of God, that if they did not keep the commandments, but should fall into transgression, they should be destroyed from off the face of the land." We can readily understand him to have been one of those diligent, long-suffering servants of the Lord who rejoiced at every manifestation of the Nephites' love for righteousness, and who frequently mourned because of their fickleness of character and the hardness of their hearts.

The last words of Jarom's record are: "And I deliver these plates into the hands of my son Omni, that they may be kept according to the commandments of my fathers."

ZORAM.

No branch of the house of Israel, so far as our knowledge extends, has produced so many warrior-prophets of the type of Joshua or Judas Maccabeus as the Nephite offshoot of the tribe of Manasseh. No history affords so many examples of men who were at once faithful servants of heaven and great military leaders. A score of typical names rush to the memory at the suggestion of the thought, among whom stand Alma (the younger), Moroni, Lehi, Zoram, Heleman, Teancum, Moronihah, Lachoneus, Gidgiddoni, and Mormon. Indeed it was the universal rule in the days of the righteousness of the Nephites for them to choose as commanders in the hour of peril those who were most devoted and zealous in the service of God. Led by such men, they felt confident of victory by reason of heaven's approval made manifest in their leaders' inspiration with divine wisdom to conquer their foes. In these expectations they were never dis-

appointed. So well did the people understand this fact that often in the days of their basest ingratitude to their Eternal Father they still selected His inspired servants to be their generals. As an instance we cite the selection of Mormon to lead their hosts against the overwhelming hordes of the Lamanites, in their final struggle for national existence. At that time they had turned away from the truth, had persecuted the servants of God, had sunken deep in filthiness, bloodthirstiness and depravity; yet Mormon, though but a boy in his sixteenth year, was their choice and their hope, and as long as he would lead them they relied upon his guidance until that last long bloody agony that left to the Lamanites sole and undisputed possession of two continents.

The Zoram of whom we now speak is suddenly introduced to the reader of the Book of Mormon as commander of the Nephite armies in the days when Nephiah was chief judge of the commonwealth, and Alma the presiding high priest of the church of Christ (B. C. 81). Towards the close of the previous year the Lamanites had made a sudden and unexpected incursion into the western portion of the Nephite territory. They had surprised and captured the proud city of Ammonihah, whose vile citizens had a few months before lit a martyrs' fire, whose wide, devouring flames were the precursors of the kindred horrors of Rome and Smithfield in centuries nearer our own times. The promised vengeance of the Lord followed swiftly. The dark-skinned warriors of Laman swept over these murderers of the saints like a tempest of fire, leaving neither young nor old, babe nor grandsire to repeat the story of their woes. Not one of Ammonihah's boasting children was left to defy heaven with their blasphemies. Nor was the city spared; it, also, was given to the destroyer, and its palaces and temples, its homes and its workshops were consumed by the devouring flames. An uninhabitable desolation, stinking with the rotting carcasses of man and beast, only remained to mark the place where Ammonihah stood. As the Desolation of Nehors it was known and avoided by the Nephites for many succeeding years.

Emboldened by this signal triumph, the Lamanites entered the borders of the contiguous land of Noah, where they continued their depredations, carrying off many Nephite captives into the wilderness. At this juncture Zoram and his two sons (Lehi and Aha), rallied the Nephite forces, in the hope of intercepting the Lamanite armies on their return to the land of Nephi, and of delivering the captives.

Before making a forward move, Zoram determined to enquire of the Lord. He and his sons knew that Alma was a prophet and a revelator to the nation. Wisely they went first to him and enquired if it was the Lord's will that they should advance into the wilderness, in search of their captive brethren.

Alma laid the matter before the Lord. The divine answer came:

"Behold the Lamanites will cross the river Sidon in the south wilderness, away up beyond the borders of the land of Manti. And behold there shall ye meet them, on the east of the river Sidon, and there the Lord will deliver unto thee thy brethren who have been taken captive by the Lamanites."

Obedient to these plain instructions Zoram and his sons crossed over the river Sidon with their armies, and marched southward beyond the borders of the land of Manti, into that portion of the great southern wilderness which lay east of the river Sidon. Here they came upon the enemy, as the word of the Lord had declared, and here they joined in battle. The Lamanites were defeated, scattered and driven into the wilderness, and the Nephite captives were delivered. Great was the joy in the land of Zarahemla when it was found that not one Nephite had been lost of all those taken prisoners, but every one, great and small, had escaped the horrors of slavery in the hands of the Lamanites, and they all returned in peace to possess their own lands. A most happy result of seeking the word of the Lord and then faithfully carrying out its instructions.

Again there was peace throughout the land, and the name of Zoram is no more mentioned in the sacred record.

GEORGE REYNOLDS.

SACRIFICE.

WHAT is sacrifice? The Savior said, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Beginning in His childhood a ministry of unselfish devotion to the work of the Father, He suffered persecution, abuse and many trials, through which He uncomplainingly passed, until the supreme sacrifice was given and He, the sinless Son of God, gave up His life that we might have eternal life. His disciples, called from their humble occupations upon which they depended for their livelihood, willingly sacrificed their time and means, and ultimately their lives also, in the service of the Master and their fellowmen.

These are our examples, from the olden times. The question is, what are we going to give? We, who have come to the same faith and have enlisted in the same cause; baptized with the same baptism into His fold, and made joint heirs in the kingdom of heaven. We are taught that "faith without works is dead;" and we know that it involves no sacrifice. If we have faith and wish to show it, we must prove it by works, and to work we must make some sacrifice. How shall we do this acceptably to the Lord? Well, we see men and women who are doing it continually. Those who go upon missions from Zion, at the cost of time and means and the surrender of many comforts and