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Book of Mormon Studies

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Abstract: This is a series of articles intended for Relief Society course study. It discusses the importance of the Book of Mormon, its coming forth (i.e., the translation, the witnesses, the publication, Joseph Smith), brief overview of its contents, and explains the text from 1 Nephi 1 through Alma 58. Each article features several questions that are helpful in synthesizing and applying the Book of Mormon to daily life.

K. Knight, Justin B. Lillywhite and Arthur B. Livingston. President Heber J. Matkin and Elder Thomas E. Paskins of the Birmingham District, Elder Nephi Cutler of the Leeds District and Elder William Fred Forsey of the Liverpool District attended as visitors.

A comprehensive program given by members of the Sunday School elucidated the importance of possessing a knowledge and testimony of the "Divinity of Jesus Christ."

As customary, at the afternoon session the District President gave a report of the work accomplished during the past six months. It revealed a noteworthy increase in nearly every phase of activity. The missionaries have devoted 2,385 hours to tracting, have distributed 81 copies of the Book of Mormon, 3,068 pamphlets and 61,710 tracts. Eight candidates have complied with the ordinances requisite to membership in the Church.

Missionaries, local officers and members of the headquarters staff bore witness with precision and conviction to their testimonies of the Gospel, as gained through varied experiences.

Sister Leah D. Widtsoe delivered impressive discourses relating to the joy, comfort and understanding attained through her membership in the Church. Complex problems of life can only be solved by the unity, love and true fellowship incorporated in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, she averred.

President John A. Widtsoe related details of the General Conference of the Church as it would be convened in Salt Lake City on the date of the Sheffield gathering. Between fifteen and twenty thousand enthusiastic members from diversified vocations would assemble there and praise God for His kindnesses and witnesses of the truth, he said. The "Mormon" Church, the Church of Jesus Christ, is a universal Church for the salvation of all who are obedient to God. He fervently attested the divinity of the latter-day work as evidenced in its establishment and subsequent vitality and growth of nearly one hundred years.

Musical numbers of high order contributed to the interest of the program. Favourable reports appeared in the *Sheffield Independent* and the *Sheffield Telegraph and Star*.

R. LEROY BLAMIRE, District Clerk

BOOK OF MORMON STUDIES*

The Liahona: "Shortly after the marriage of his sons to the daughters of Ishmael, Lehi was directed by the Lord to continue his journey the next day towards the land of promise. The little colony had been organizing and resting for some time at

*Lesson 9 of the Relief Society Course of Study—for use on the first lesson night in May.

the place they had first selected on the shores of the Red Sea, near a little stream which Lehi called the River Laman, in honour of his eldest son. The next morning when Lehi arose and went to his tent door he found near by a round ball of curious workmanship. It was made of fine brass, and within it were two spindles or needles, one of which pointed the way the company should travel.

“The country through which they were about to pass was new to them and they had no guide who knew the way. They were acquainted with the region between Jerusalem and the Red Sea, and consequently did not need any person or thing to point out that road. From this time it would be different; all was strange to them; without divine help they might die for want of water and food, or fall into the hands of the inhabitants of the land, or entirely lose their way in the desert. So the Lord provided this ball, which they called ‘Liahona.’ It had the strange peculiarity of working according to their faith, and, when necessary, writing would appear on it, giving instructions to them what to do in cases of emergency. In fact, it took the place and performed the work of the fiery, cloudy pillar that went before the Israelites when Jehovah led them out of Egypt in the days of Moses. . . .

“They continued to follow the directions of the ball, which led them through the more fertile parts of the wilderness. By and by they changed their direction and traveled almost directly eastward, across the Arabian Peninsula, until they reached the waters of the great ocean.”*

“When the people of Lehi reached the seashore, they rejoiced greatly that their tedious wanderings were over; for they had not traveled in a straight line from coast to coast, but had wandered around and about as the Liahona directed them, which worked according to their faith and faithfulness. Eight years had been spent in taking a journey that, had they been faithful as they should have been, would only have occupied a few weeks or months.

“They pitched their tents by the seashore and after many days the voice of the Lord came unto Nephi, saying: ‘Arise and get thee into the mountain.’ As ever, Nephi obeyed the heavenly word. He went up into the mountain and there cried unto the Lord. Then the Lord commanded him to build a ship after a manner and pattern that He would show him, so that the colony might be carried across the great waters that lay before them.

“Here a difficulty presented itself to the mind of Nephi. He had no tools and it was not possible to build a ship without them. So he laid the matter before the Lord, who, in answer to his

*Deseret Sunday School Union Leaflets, October, 1889. I Nephi, Chapter 16: 8-10.

prayers, told him where he could find ore with which he might make the tools he needed.*

Building of the Ship: "When his brothers saw that Nephi was about to build a ship, they began to ridicule him. They would give him no help, for they did not believe he was instructed of the Lord. Nephi became very sorrowful because of the hardness of their hearts. When they saw this they were glad, and tauntingly told him they knew that he was lacking in judgment and could not accomplish so great a work.

"They reproached him with being like their father, in being led away by the foolish imaginations of his heart. They recited their imaginary grievances against Lehi for leading them out of Jerusalem and bringing upon them the sufferings which they and their wives had endured since leaving that city. Warming up with their complaints, they said it would have been better for their wives to have died before they left Jerusalem than to have had such afflictions as they had borne. While they were suffering all these hardships in the desert they might, they said, have been happily enjoying themselves at home. As for the people of Jerusalem, notwithstanding their father's condemnation of them, they declared that they knew them to be righteous people; for they kept the statutes and judgments of the Lord and His commandments according to the law of Moses. But their father had led them away, because they had hearkened to him, and now Nephi, their brother, was just like him."†

The Ship is Finished: The elder brothers of Nephi were rebellious against his wisdom and jealous of his power. Again and again the Lord assisted Nephi in divers ways to convince them of their folly in unbelief. "Then the brothers of Nephi worshiped the Lord, and showed their repentance by helping Nephi to build the ship; while he, from time to time, received the word of the Lord as to how he should work its timbers; for he did not work after the manner of the ship-builders of that time, nor after any manner that men were accustomed to. But he built the ship just as the Lord had shown it to him; and we cannot doubt that it was admirably suited for its purpose. Nephi also often went up into the mount and prayed to the Lord, and God showed him many great things.

"When the vessel was finished, Nephi's brothers saw that it was good, and its workmanship exceedingly fine, therefore they again humbled themselves before Heaven. Then the voice of the Lord came to Lehi and commanded the company to go on board, which word they willingly obeyed, and at once put forth to sea."‡

*Deseret Sunday School Union Leaflets, January, 1896.

†*Ibid.*

‡*Ibid.*

QUESTIONS

1. Relate the main parts of Nephi's vision. What does he have to say concerning the two churches?
2. What interpretation does Nephi give to his father Lehi's teachings?—1 Nephi, chapter 14.
3. What is the meaning of the word *Irreantum* and how is it used in the text?
4. Relate the incident of Nephi breaking his bow and the results.
5. Who was Ishmael? Tell of his connection with Lehi. Tell of his death and its effect upon the little colony.
6. By what power and in what way did Nephi stay the rebellion of his elder brothers? What was its effect on them?
7. What can you say of Nephi as a ship-builder?

 CHURCH-WIDE NEWS

THE APPOINTMENT OF ELDER FRED M. TADJE as President of the Swiss-German Mission, to succeed President Hugh J. Cannon, who has presided over the Mission for the past two and one-half years and who has recently been appointed Editor of the *Improvement Era*, was announced by the First Presidency on March 23rd.

This will be Elder Tadge's third mission. He first served in the Netherlands from 1906 to 1909. In the spring of 1923 he was appointed President of the Swiss-German Mission, which then included what is now the German-Austrian Mission. Under Elder Tadge's presidency the division that now obtains in the German Missions was made.

President Tadge returned home from presiding over the German-Austrian territory only fifteen months ago. He, with his wife and family, were making arrangements to leave Salt Lake City for their field of labour shortly after the General Conference of the Church.

 FROM THE MISSION FIELD

Releases and Departures: The following missionaries have been honourably released and sailed for their homes in America from Southampton on April 12th aboard the *George Washington*: Elder David W. Sutton, who has laboured in the Leeds, Nottingham and Norwich Districts; Elder Elmer O. Zollinger, who has laboured in the Swiss-German Mission, in the London District of the British Mission and as President of the Leeds District, British Mission.

Doings in the Districts: Leeds—A meeting of the missionaries in the Leeds District convened in Bradford on April 7th. Plans for summer work were formulated. A concert was presented in a