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Characters and Teachings of the Book of Mormon: Lesson 5—Orihah to Coriantumr

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Abstract: The objective of this lesson is to emphasize the necessity of obeying prophetic counsel from a study of the history of the Jaredite nation under the rule of kings.



Theology—Characters and Teachings of The Book of Mormon

Lesson 5—Orihah to Coriantumr

Elder Leland H. Monson

(Text: The Book of Mormon: Ether, chapters 8-11.)

For Tuesday, February 5, 1952

Objective: From a study of the history of the Jaredite nation under the rule of kings, to emphasize the necessity of obeying prophetic counsel.

Note to Class Leaders:

The limitations of this lesson do not allow a detailed account of the reigns of kings from Orihah to Coriantumr. Throughout the narrative the class leader would do well to point out the lesson to be gained from the results of righteousness or wickedness in the lives of the Jaredite people. She may deal with the details of the different reigns as she sees fit. It is suggested that different sisters be given assignments on certain kings or happenings to help differentiate these in the minds of the class members. A listing of the kings on a blackboard would be helpful to refer to as the lesson proceeds. The class leader will note that the lesson contains two parts—the first one a narration of part of the history of the Jaredites, and the second, certain teachings of Moroni.

IN our last lesson we learned that the people under the direction of Jared and his brother fervently desired that their leaders appoint one of their sons to be their king. The brother of Jared warned them of the danger of such a plan, saying, "Surely this thing leadeth into captivity" (Ether 6:23). Jared interceded, however, and advised his

brother to permit the people to have a king. The brother of Jared yielded to Jared's request, saying to the people, "Choose ye out from among our sons a king, even whom ye will" (Ether 6:24).

The kingship was rejected by all the sons of the brother of Jared, and by all of the sons of Jared except Orihah, who was anointed king over the young nation.

During the generations to come, we see proof of the wisdom of the brother of Jared when he warned, "Surely this thing leadeth into captivity."

Orihah reigned for a long period of time in righteousness and then his son, Kib reigned. Corihor, son of Kib, desiring power and gain, rebelled against his father and withdrew to the land of Nehor. He was followed by many people. Slowly, he gathered together armed forces, which he used against his father, bringing him into captivity, which brought to pass the saying of the brother of Jared.

In his old age, while still in captivity, Kib had a son, Shule, who became mighty in physical power and mighty in judgment. He armed those whom he had drawn away with him, with steel swords, defeated his brother Corihor, and restored the kingdom to his father, Kib.

Deeply appreciative of the loyalty and devotion of his son, Kib bestowed upon him the kingdom. Shule executed judgment in righteousness and spread his kingdom upon all the face of the land.

Because he had a compassionate heart, Shule forgave his brother, Corihor, who had repented of the many evils he had done, and gave him power in the kingdom. However, Noah, son of Corihor, rebelled against his repentant father and against King Shule. Together with his brother, Cohor, he conspired and gained control of Moron, the land of their first inheritance, thus creating a divided kingdom in the land of promise, the kingdom of Shule and the kingdom of Noah. Subsequently, Noah carried king Shule into captivity.

As Noah was about to put Shule to death, the sons of Shule crept into the house of Noah by night and slew him, and broke down the door of the prison and brought out their father, and placed him back on his own throne. Cohor, son of Noah, then ruled in his father's place, thus continuing the divided kingdom. These two kingdoms, however, were united in the next generation after Cohor was beaten in battle and slain, and Nimrod, son of Cohor, relinquished his rights in the kingdom of Cohor to king Shule.

During the reign of Shule, prophets who were sent from the Lord warned the people of impending destruction, except they renounce their wickedness and idolatry. But the call for repentance went unheeded by many, who mocked and reviled the prophets. Supported by King Shule, however, the prophets, in time, brought the people to a state of repentance. Peace and prosperity followed.

The kingdom passed from Shule to Omer his son, who, like his father, ruled in righteousness. Jared, son of Omer, however, rebelled against his father, and, by means of flattery, won the hearts of the people, gained half the kingdom, and finally carried his father away into captivity. There Omer remained for half his days. Other sons of Omer, however, restored the kingdom to their father. Jared pleaded with his brothers to spare his life. His plea was granted, but he did not repent, for "he had set his heart upon the kingdom and upon the glory of the world" (Ether 8:7). He sorrowed, not for the wrongs he had done, but because God would not permit him to continue in his sinful path.

The fair daughter of Jared, seeing her father's sorrows, devised a plan to restore him to the throne. Appealing to her father, she said:

Is there not an account concerning them of old, that they by their secret plans did obtain kingdoms and great glory? And now, therefore, let my father send for Akish, the son of Kimmor; and behold, I am fair, and I will dance before him, and I will please him, that he will desire me to wife; wherefore, if he shall desire of thee that ye shall give unto him me to wife; then shall ye say: I will

give her if ye will bring unto me the head of my father, the king (Ether 8:9-12).

Part of the plan worked perfectly. Akish built up a secret combination among his friends, each one pledging by the God of heaven, by the earth, and by his own head that whoso should "vary from the assistance which Akish desired should lose his head" (Ether 8:14). Because of this secret combination, Akish and his friends were successful in overthrowing the kingdom of Omer. However, God in his mercy warned Omer in a dream that he should depart out of the land. Wherefore Omer departed out of the land with all of his household, except Jared and his family.

Jared was anointed king over the people by the hand of wickedness and he gave his daughter to Akish in marriage. But his was not a peaceful reign. Like Macbeth, in securing the throne he had but taught the people to murder, which teaching returned to plague the initiator. Desirous for power, Akish now plotted against his father-in-law, Jared, who was murdered upon his throne, giving audience to his people; and Akish reigned in his stead. Steeped in wickedness and becoming jealous of one of his sons, Akish imprisoned him and starved him to death. Nimrah, his brother, angered by this atrocity, gathered together a small number of men who fled and dwelt with Omer.

New conspiracies were now developed. Younger sons of Akish plotted against him. The people were desirous for gain, and the younger sons offered them money "by which means they drew away

the more part of the people after them." In the long civil war which followed, only thirty persons survived, and those who had previously fled to Omer. Wherefore, Omer was restored again to the land of his inheritance.

In his old age, Omer anointed his son, Emer, king over the people. Because of the righteousness of Emer and his people, the Lord removed the curse from the land. The people once more became rich and strong.

The nature of the civilization established by Emer is indicated by the nature of their produce. They had all kinds of fruits, grains, cattle, oxen, sheep, swine, goats, horses, asses, elephants, cureloms, and cumoms, silks and linens, and gold, silver and precious things.

Emer executed judgment in righteousness all his days. He saw peace in the land and even saw the Son of Righteousness. The destruction of secret combinations gave them freedom and security. By seeking first the kingdom of heaven and its righteousness, they had riches and happiness.

Emer anointed his son, Coriantum, king, who ruled in righteousness over a good and happy people. Their next king, Com, also ruled in the best interests of the people; but Heth, son of Com, revived the secret combinations and slew his father.

Again there came prophets into the land crying repentance unto them and warning of a great famine. But the people refused to listen and cast them out. The famine came and with it poisonous serpents in such number the flocks fled before them southward. The Lord

caused the serpents to hedge up the way that the people could not follow their flocks. Not until the people saw that they must perish did they repent and cry unto the Lord who sent rain upon the land.

Heth, the wrongdoer, and all his household, except Shez, perished in the famine. Shez began to rebuild a broken and unhappy kingdom.

As we proceed with our history of the Jaredite empire, we continue through a period of internal strife. Remembering what the Lord had done in bringing Jared and his brother across the deep, king Shez sought to build up a righteous people. His eldest son, Shez, rebelled against him, but was smitten by the hand of a robber because of his exceeding riches, which brought peace again unto his father (Ether 10:3).

Immediately after the death of the king, who lived to an old age, his son Riplakish, ascended the throne. Lacking the integrity of his father, Riplakish did many things which were wrong in the sight of God. He had many wives and concubines; he levied heavy taxes upon the people to carry out a great building program; he constructed many prisons and forced the prisoners not only to labor for their own support, but also to refine gold and work all manner of fine workmanship for him. (Ether 10:5). After forty-two years the people rose in rebellion; and he was killed and his descendants driven out of the land.

After many years of warfare, Morianton, a descendant of Riplakish established himself king over the land. He did justice unto the people helping them to build many cities and become prosperous, but

his personal conduct cut him off from the presence of the Lord.

Alternating periods of righteousness and wickedness occurred during the reigns of a number of kings. Finally, in the reign of Com, many prophets predicted the destruction of the people, except they repent of their wickedness. Because of their wicked combinations, the people refused to hearken. Wars, contentions, famines, and pestilence ultimately brought repentance.

But this period of repentance was followed by another long period of wickedness, in the midst of which prophets warned that the Lord would destroy them except they repented. The warning was in vain and the prophets withdrew. Subsequently, many prophets cried repentance. These prophets warned that except they repent, the Lord would bring forth another people to inherit the land.

Moroni, in his teachings, says that these secret combinations were "most abominable and wicked above all, in the sight of God." Continuing his criticism, Moroni points out their tremendous destructive power to us today.

* And they have caused the destruction of this people of whom I am now speaking, and also the destruction of the people of Nephi. And whatsoever nation shall uphold such secret combinations, to get power and gain, until they shall spread over the nation, behold, they shall be destroyed; for the Lord will not suffer that the blood of his saints, which shall be shed by them, shall always cry unto him from the ground for vengeance upon them and yet he avenge them not. Wherefore, O ye Gentiles, it is wisdom in God that these things should be shown unto you, that thereby ye may repent of your sins, and suffer not that these murderous combinations shall get

above you, which are built up to get power and gain—and the work, yea, even the work of destruction come upon you, yea, even the sword of the justice of the Eternal God shall fall upon you, to your overthrow and destruction if ye shall suffer these things to be (Ether 8:21-23).

Solicitous of our welfare today, Moroni warns us that these secret combinations are built up to “overthrow the freedom of all lands, nations, and countries; and it bringeth to pass the destruction of all people, for it is built up by the devil” (Ether 8:25). He begs us

to avoid them and to do good continually. What a powerful message from The Book of Mormon to our day and time.

Questions for Discussion

1. To what can we attribute the loss of liberty of the Jaredites?
2. What does Moroni say about secret combinations?
3. Point out the two contrasts in living (Ether 10:28 and 11:6, 7).
4. Apply the message of this lesson to our day and time.

Visiting Teacher Messages

Book of Mormon Gems of Truth

Lesson 5—“There Is Nothing Which Is Good Save It Comes From the Lord; and That Which Is Evil Cometh From the Devil” (Omni 25).

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For Tuesday, February 5, 1952

Objective: To show that it is not just to hold God accountable for the wicked state of the world.

THERE are two forces in the world—good and evil. All that is good, we are told, comes from God, and all that is evil, from Satan. From the beginning man has been exposed to these two influences—on the one hand that of love and mercy, emanating from God, and, on the other hand, the spirit of the adversary, which fosters hatred, envy, and greed.

Many perplexing questions can be answered if we ponder this clear-cut statement from the Book of Mormon. From it we understand that God is not accountable for the wickedness in the world. True, we live in an environment where both

good and evil are present, to the end that we may choose for ourselves the one or the other, for that is a necessary part of this earth-life, but the Lord does not bring about evil, is not the author of wickedness.

Some ask, “Why does God permit war to be waged among the nations of the earth? Why does God allow all forms of wickedness and corruption to continue in the world?” God allows these things because he does not force men to live righteously. Much as he would like to see all mankind living nobly, it is not God’s plan to force the human mind and will. Man brings