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## Chapter XXVII

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**Abstract:** Zoram and the Zoramites—Their Peculiar Heresy—The Land of Antionum—The Rameumptom—Alma's Mission to these People—Those Who Receive His Teachings Persecuted—They Flee to Jershon

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lest when restored to speech he would again strive to deceive the people.

And it came to pass that the curse was not taken off Kōrihor; but he was cast out, and went about from house to house begging for his food.

A proclamation was next sent throughout all the land. In it the chief judge recited what had happened to Kōrihor, and called upon those who had believed in his words to speedily repent, lest the same judgments should come upon them.

This proclamation put an end to the iniquity of Kōrihor, for his followers were all brought back again to the truth. But Kōrihor, deserted by the devil, a vagabond and a beggar, still continued to beg his way from town to town, from house to house; until, one day, in a city of the Zoramites, he was run over and trodden down. The injuries that he received at this time were so great that he soon after died.

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## CHAPTER XXVII.

ZORAM AND THE ZORAMITES—THEIR PECULIAR HERESY—  
THE LAND OF ANTIONUM—THE RAMEUMPTOM—ALMA'S  
MISSION TO THESE PEOPLE—THOSE WHO RECEIVE HIS  
TEACHINGS PERSECUTED—THEY FLEE TO JERSHON.

IN OUR last chapter we stated that Kōrihor, the anti-Christ, was killed in a city of the Zoramites. Who was Zoram? and who were the Zoramites? are the questions that now present themselves.

There are two distinct classes of people called Zoramites in the Book of Mormon. The first, the

descendants of Zoram, the servant of Laban, who accompanied Nephi from Jerusalem. The second were the followers of the apostate Zoram, whose defection and treason caused so much trouble and bloodshed in the Nephite republic.

Of the last named Zoram and his individual life we have no history. We only know him through his pernicious teachings, and the sad results thereof. But it is altogether probable that before he started out as a religious reformer on his own account, he was a follower of Nehor, as the majority of his adherents appear to have been gathered from that sect and to have belonged to that order.

Zoram assembled his people in a region of the South American continent, at that time but very thinly settled by the Nephites. It was called the land of Antionum, and lay to the east of the river Sidon, while it stretched from the land of Jershon in the north, to the great wilderness south, which was infested with the more savage, wandering Lamanites. To this broad land the Zoramites gathered, and there built their cities, erected their synagogues, and grew in material wealth; until, in the year B. C. 75, they had become an important, though undesirable portion of the Nephite commonwealth. As friends they were unreliable, as enemies formidable.

In the various apostasies, partial or total, that from time to time disgraced the Nephites, there is one characteristic feature that seems universal to them all, however much they may have differed on minor points. It was the denial of the coming of the Savior in the flesh, and of the necessity of His atonement for the sins of the world. This was the evil one's strong point in his

efforts to mislead the ancient Nephites. Let him but persuade any people to reject this, the foundation of the gospel scheme, and little he cares what else they believe or disbelieve; for when this fundamental truth is rejected their spiritual enslavement is secured.

This was the case with the Zoramites. They claimed to be a chosen and a holy people, separate from their fellowmen, and elected of God to eternal salvation, while all around were predestined to be cast down to hell. This atrocious creed naturally resulted in its adherents and advocates being puffed up in vanity and consumed with pride. They became haughty, uncharitable and tyrannical, and oppressors of their poorer neighbors. They covered their bodies with the finest apparel, and profusely adorned their persons with costly ornaments of gold and jewels. In their arrogance and self-righteousness they became the Pharisees of their age and country; but in other phases of iniquity they far exceeded their counterparts in the Holy Land. They bowed down to idols, denied the coming of Christ, declared the doctrine of the atonement to be a foolish tradition, and, like many of the sects of modern Christendom, they misinterpreted the teachings of holy scripture with regard to the being of God. Their declaration of faith was: Holy, holy God; we believe that thou art God, and we believe that thou art holy, and that thou wast a spirit, and that thou art a spirit, and that thou wilt be a spirit forever.

This strange medley of ideas gave birth to corresponding vagaries of worship. They left off praying. Being chosen and elected to be God's holy children, they had no need of prayer. Once a week they assembled in their synagogues and went through an empty

form, which was a little prayer, a little praise and considerable self-glorification. Having done this, they never mentioned God or holy things again throughout the week; indeed, it was a portion of their creed that their synagogues were the only places in which it was lawful to talk or think of religious matters.

Their ceremonies were as absurd as their creed. In the centre of each of their synagogues was erected a holy stand, or pulpit, called *ramenptom*, which stood high above the congregation. From the slight description given of it in the book of Alma we judge it to have been somewhat pyramidal in form, the top being only large enough for one person to stand upon. Each worshiper mounted to the top, stretched out his hands toward heaven, and, in a loud voice, repeated their set form of worship. Having done this, he descended and another took his place, and so on, until all who desired to go through the mummerly had satisfied their conscience or gratified their pride.

The tidings of this defection having reached Alma, he selected several of the leading members of the priesthood, and, as soon as possible, proceeded to the land Antionnm, where the Zoramites had gathered. Those who accompanied him were his two younger sons, three of the sons of king Mosiah, Amulek and Zeezrom. To his anxiety to bring these dissenters back from the error of their ways, and to avert heaven's righteous wrath from falling upon them, was added the fear that if they remained in their wickedness they would join the Lamanites and bring trouble upon their more faithful fellow Nephites by urging the renewal of war.

On the arrival of Alma and his fellow-laborers at



the seat of this apostasy, they at once commenced their ministrations. They taught in the synagogues and preached in the streets. They visited the people from house to house, using every possible effort to bring these misguided dissenters to an understanding of their perilous condition. To these labors we are indebted for some of the plainest and most powerful gospel teachings contained in the Book of Mormon, all of which will well repay our perusal. Suffice it to say, that many of the poor and humble, those who were oppressed, abused and trodden down by their false priests and unrighteous rulers, as well as by the wealthier portion of the community, received the words of salvation, while the majority rejected it with contemptuous scorn. Some of the missionaries were maltreated. Shiblon, the son of Alma, was imprisoned and stoned for the truth's sake, while others fared but little better. Unfortunately the work of God was retarded by the misconduct of Corianton, the brother of Shiblon, who, for a time, deserted his ministerial duties for the company of a harlot. This folly caused Alma great sorrow, as it gave the ungodly a pretext for rejecting the gospel, of which they were not slow to avail themselves.

When Alma and his associates had done all the good they deemed possible, they withdrew to the neighboring land of Jershon. No sooner had they left than the more crafty of the Zoramites devised a plan to discover the feelings of the community. They gathered the people together throughout the land and consulted with them concerning that which they had heard. In this way they discovered who favored the truth and who rejected it. Finding that the poor and uninfluen-

tial were those who had received it, they resorted to persecution and plunder. They drove the believers from their homes and out of the land. Most of these fled to the land of Jershon, whither the priesthood had preceded them.

The land of Jershon was inhabited by the people of Ammon. They also had left home and country for the truth's sake, and now that others were suffering from the same cause, they received them with open arms. They fed and clothed those who needed such help, and gave them lands whereon they might build up new homes.

When the wicked Zoramites heard of the kind reception their injured fellow-citizens had received in Jershon they were greatly angered. They were not content to spoil them themselves, but they wanted to make them fugitives and vagabonds on the face of the whole earth. Their leader, a very wicked man, sent messages to the Ammonites, desiring them to expel the refugees, adding many threats of what would follow, should his cruel demand not be complied with. But the Ammonites were a brave people; they had already suffered unto death for the cause of God, and they were not of the stamp to desert their afflicted brethren. Rather than do so, they would again forsake their homes and find in some other region a land of peace. For we must remind our readers that the Ammonites had entered into covenant with God never again to bend the bow or draw the sword to take human life. They, therefore, withdrew to the land of Melek, whilst the armies of the Nephites occupied the land of Jershon.