

Book of Mormon Study – Mosiah 7-10

Online zoom Sunday School, 3 May 2020

Some Chronology

- **[Around 279 BC]** Amaron, son of Omni, delivers the plates to his brother, Chemish.
- **[?]** Abinadom, son of Chemish, "saw much war" (Omni 1:10). "I know of no revelation..." (v 11)
- **[?]** Mosiah leads people out of land of Nephi to Zarahemla (Omni 1:12-13)
- **[?]** In days of king Benjamin, son of Mosiah, there is "a serious war" with Lamanites (Omni 1:24)
- **[Around 200 BC]** Zeniff leads expedition to the land of Nephi.
- **[Around 160 BC]** Zeniff confers kingdom on his son, Noah.
- **[Around 148 BC]** Abinadi begins to prophesy.
- **[124 BC]** Benjamin addressed his people.
- **[About 121 BC]** Ammon discovered people of Limhi. (Not to be confused with missionary Ammon who preached to king Lamoni, - Alma 17:18ff, about 30 years later, around 91 BC)

Mosiah 1:1

The people "wearied [king Mosiah] with their teasings" to know what happened of the people who went up to the land of Lehi-Nephi (see Omni 1:27-30).

Some questions:

Why did they need the King's permission to go? If they're a free people, why not just go? Did they want the King's blessing? One thought is, like Columbus, they needed help funding the mission. When the king granted permission (v 2), they left "on the morrow" (v 3), meaning they left the very next day. Suggests that they were already packed and ready. So seems unlikely they needed "funding". There is an intense curiosity or draw to know and find out about what has happened to Zeniff. Very possible and likely that in the group led by Ammon (and perhaps Ammon himself?) were family and descendants related to those who had left some 79 years before.

Also Zeniff has an intense drive to go down to the land of Lehi-Nephi. For some reason that is not given, he is drawn and quite insistent on going down to possess the land. Even to the irrational point of being naive enough to believe the Lamanites would be willing to just step away and let them come in and occupy. Which is what happened, but they stepped aside for an evil intent.

Did Zeniff get permission from king Mosiah (Benjamin's father) to go down like Ammon's group did with grandson king Mosiah later?

Mosiah 7:15

"...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." Did King Benjamin implement the policy of no slavery (Mosiah 2:13) after Zeniff left for the land of Nephi?

Mosiah 7:25

"shed blood among themselves" – Was there civil war? Could this reference include the conflict described in Mosiah 9:2?

Mosiah 7:26-28

The reason Abinadi was killed was because he taught about Mashiach (Christ). See 1 Ne 1:19-20 how they sought to kill Lehi only after he taught about Christ.

Mosiah 7:29

"I will not succor my people in the day of their transgression"

And he will take upon him death, that he may loose the bands of death which bind his people; and he will take upon him their infirmities, that his bowels may be filled with mercy, according to the flesh, that he may know according to the flesh how to succor his people according to their infirmities. (Alma 7:12)

Revelation is required:

"Salvation cannot come without revelation; it is in vain for anyone to minister without it. No man is a minister of Jesus Christ without being a Prophet. No man can be a minister of Jesus Christ except he has the testimony of Jesus; and this is the spirit of prophecy. Whenever salvation has been administered, it has been by testimony. Men of the present time testify of heaven and hell, and have never seen either; and I will say that no man knows these things without this." (Joseph Smith, DHC: 3: 389-390;)

Do you have a testimony of Christ? If so, you should be having revelation. As we have seen, the two are linked together. It is through revelation He will succor you. He will allow you to clearly understand the challenges you face. He will guide you past the trials and comfort you in what can only be suffered and not overcome. Just like Him, some of our trials cannot be overcome, but can be endured. He will strengthen your weaknesses to allow you to endure. But, He is able to do so only if you come to Him.

Our testimony of Christ is tied to revelation. Revelation is tied to obedience. Both are tied to the light we obtain here. And all of these are the Atonement of Christ at work in your life.

Whether or not you receive the full Atonement for your sins depends on whether you will permit Him to succor you. It is not a future work. He is not going to magically remove errors from you after you die. Rather, He is working to remove them from you now, in the life you are living now. He will guide you past the errors in your life, if you will receive His succor. His succor includes His commandments, and His revelations. If you will not obey Him, you cannot receive the Atonement He offers. If you will not ask for, receive and follow His revelations to you, then you will not receive an Atonement which He offers.

Christ succors us. How can He succor us if we don't receive revelation? Here in Mosiah we are told, "I will not succor my people in the day of their transgression." For me to be succored I need to hear him. In the day of my transgression, where I am distancing myself from Him, I am not hearing him, so I cannot be succored.

Mosiah 8:13-17

Definition of Seer:

The concept captured by the title “seer” involves sight. Seeing is the hallmark of the seer. They have vision. A seer is someone who has knowledge of things which cannot be seen with the natural eye. When Joseph Smith received the Urim and Thummim from an angel, he was told: the possession and use of these stones were what constituted seers in ancient or former times... (JSH 3:3; see also Mosiah 5:13). When anyone has possession of such an instrument, they are, by definition, a seer; the instrument itself allows the possessor to see the past, present, and future. However, it is not necessary to possess this instrument to be a seer. Whenever hidden knowledge is revealed to a person, the recipient is a seer. Whether they have a Urim and Thummim or not, anyone receiving Divine revelation of future or past events has the gift of seership. It remains the calling of a seer to reveal things which are secret or hidden. Seers have a responsibility to teach others or, if their contemporary generation rejects them, to leave a written testimony for future generations. Any people who have a seer among them gain knowledge of things as they are, as they were, and as they are to come. Mankind needs living seers, or they are cut off from one of the gifts intended to guide them. Seership and exaltation are connected. “There is no reason you cannot also receive the gift of seership to guide you as occasion requires. The knowledge of some things requires you to behold the past, present and future.” Seership is a voluntary process; anyone who is willing to follow the path to get there may climb the mountain and see into the distance. Seership is something that all ought to expect will be included in the Lord’s tutelage while they are here. (Teachings and Commandments, pg 798)

When anyone has possession of such an instrument, they are a “seer” by definition, the instrument itself allows the possessor to see the past, present and future. However, it is not necessary to possess this instrument to be a seer. Perhaps the greatest seer, other than Christ, did not possess an instrument like the Urim and Thummim. Enoch saw things through vision, without any instrument, after his eyes were anointed for that purpose. We read in Moses 6:35-36: “*And the Lord spake unto Enoch, and said unto him: Anoint thine eyes with clay, and wash them, and thou shalt see. And he did so. And he beheld the spirits that God had created; and he beheld also things which were not visible to the natural eye; and from thenceforth came the saying abroad in the land: A seer hath the Lord raised up unto his people.*”

Once anointed, Enoch was able to see things the natural eye could not detect. This runs contrary to our preference for physical proof. Since the things Enoch saw were “not visible to the natural eye,” they were not capable of being proven in the normal sense. To obtain any benefit from Enoch as seer, the people had to trust his witness account of what he saw, or they had to obtain a similar vision themselves. If they were unwilling to do either, then they would not benefit from his gift.

Enoch’s testimony is restored to us through another seer, Joseph Smith. In the case of Enoch, we are required not only to believe him, but also to trust Joseph’s account of Enoch’s visions. It is twice removed from us requiring great faith to accept, and holding commensurate great value in its meaning. Enoch’s vision extended to the past, present and future. He was caught up to heaven and had an

audience with Christ. While in the heavenly vision, he was shown the future and past of the earth. Among other things, Enoch saw the future flood, the future life of Christ, the crucifixion, the resurrection and the latter-day restoration of the Gospel.

A similar vision of all the history of this earth was given to Moses. But it is not necessary to actually possess either the Urim and Thummim or have your eyes altered by anointing to have such a vision, or to be a seer. Isaiah was a great seer, although he never mentions possession of a Urim and Thummim. Nephi also saw these things at a time before the Nephites gained possession of the instrument. Others have had such a Divine tutorial in the world's history as well. Daniel saw the world's history unfold in the form of an image seen by Nebuchadnezzar. (See Danile Chapter 2.) He also saw the future end times and Christ's return. (See Daniel Chapter 10.)

The vision of this earth's history, from beginning to end, is a common experience for many seers. Whether or not they have the Urim and Thummim, seers have often seen the full account of it. More often than not, however "they are laid under a strict command that they shall not impart." (Alma 12:9.) We should expect the seers' accounts of what they have seen to be limited, and never a complete revelation of everything they know.

Joseph Smith commented on the effects of having such a vision in these words: "Could we read and comprehend all that has been written from the days of Adam, on the relation of man to God and angels in a future state, we should know very little about it. Reading the experience of others, or the revelation given to them, can never give us a comprehensive view of our condition and true relation to God. Knowledge of these things can only be obtained by experience through the ordinances of God set forth for that purpose. Could you gaze into heaven five minutes, you would know more than you would by reading all that ever was written on the subject." (DHC 6:50)

The concept captured by the title "seer" involves sight. Seeing is the hallmark of the seer. They have vision. The opposite of the visionary seer are those who are "blind." The "blindness" referred to in scripture is often coupled with the "mind." That is, people are "blind in their minds." (See, e.g., 1 Ne. 14:7; Jarom 1:3; Alma 13:4; Alma 14:6; 3 Ne. 7:16; Ether 4:15 and Ether 15:9.) Sometimes it is "blindness of the heart." (See, e.g., D&C 58:15 and Eph. 4:8.) Both these uses have nothing to do with physical sight, but with the willingness to allow into the mind or into the heart the great visions offered by God.

"Blindness" is a voluntary condition. Nephi writes: "Wo unto the blind that will not see; for they shall perish also." (2 Ne. 9:32.) He speaks of those who "will not see" instead of those who "cannot see." It is a choice. They elect to be "blind." They refuse to receive what might otherwise have been available to them. In that sense, seership is also a voluntary process. Anyone who is willing to follow the path to get there may climb the mountain and see into the distance.

The highest form of truth and light comes through revelation. It requires faith to obtain, and cannot be reached by study alone. Not everyone has faith to acquire this, however. For them, study is a substitute allowing them to gain some forms of very limited knowledge. D&C 88:118 reminds us: "And as all have not faith, seek ye diligently and teach one another words of wisdom; yea, seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom; seek learning, even by study and also by faith." (Emphasis added.) Faith is preferred. Study and the best books are secondary. God would prefer us to get information first-hand from Him. However, people generally are unwilling to do that, and prefer instead to learn through study. Worse still, some prefer to "learn" by attending lectures, firesides, symposiums, and classes without revelation

or study. They presume they can cut corners in this way and still get whatever it is they need. They cannot. Such things can never connect us with the living vine, give us our own revelations, animate our minds with the visions of eternity, or make us seers.

Any people who have a seer among them gain knowledge of things as they are, as they were, and as they are to come. This is the definition of truth: "And truth is knowledge of things as they are, and as they were, and as they are to come;" (D&C 93:24.) This is also part of the definition of a seer: "But a seer can know of things which are past, and also of things which are to come, and by them shall all things be revealed, or, rather, shall secret things be made manifest." (Mosiah 8:17.)

[T]here is no reason you cannot also receive the gift of seership to guide you as occasion requires. The knowledge of some things requires you to behold the past, present and future. Paul's admonition to seek earnestly the best gifts did not exclude seership. (1 Cor. 12:31.)

[Stick of Joseph, footnote for Mosiah 8:17](#)

Throughout this verse, the underlying Hebrew word behind "things" would be *devarim* which can mean "things" but can also mean "words." The words "secret" and דברים "hidden" point to the underlying Hebrew word *sod* סוד. The *sod* level of interpretation deals with hidden messages in the original Hebrew of the Scriptures.