

Link to Online Lesson: [“A Seer ... Becometh a Great Benefit to His Fellow Beings”](#)

Class Member Reading: Mosiah 7 - 11

Mosiah 7

1 And now, it came to pass that after king Mosiah had had continual peace for the space of three years, he was desirous to know concerning the people who went up to dwell in the land of Lehi-Nephi, or in the city of Lehi-Nephi; for his people had heard nothing from them from the time they left the land of Zarahemla; therefore, they wearied him with their teasings. This wording has always amused me. This is the departure is mentioned in Omni 1:27-30. There are three locations to keep straight: 1) The Lehites original landing area, from which Nephi fled to escape his brothers (2 Ne. 5:6); 2) the land of Lehi-Nephi mentioned here, where Nephi and his people settled (2 Ne. 5:8, a journey of “many days”); and the land of Zarahemla (Where Mosiah I flees with his people as recounted in Omni 1:12). When we are well our thoughts and hearts extend to others.

2 And it came to pass that king Mosiah granted that sixteen of their strong men might go up to the land of Lehi-Nephi, to inquire concerning their brethren.

3 And it came to pass that on the morrow they started to go up, having with them one Ammon, he being a strong and mighty man, and a descendant of Zarahemla; and he was also their leader.

4 And now, they **knew not the course they should travel** in the wilderness to go up to the land of Lehi-Nephi; therefore they wandered many days in the wilderness, even forty days did they wander.

5 And when they had wandered forty days they came to a hill, which is north of the land of Shilom, and there they pitched their tents.

6 And Ammon took three of his brethren, and their names were Amaleki, Helem, and Hem, and they went down into the land of Nephi. I think I find these name similarities too interesting... I want to figure out how they could be connected. Mosiah’s son is named Ammon... I think they were related. Mosiah I found the Mulekites. There were fewer Nephites than Mulekites,

and the Nephites took over the leadership. A political alliance through marriage would have made a great deal of sense. So perhaps Benjamin married one of Zarahemla's daughters, which would make Ammon Mosiah's uncle perhaps? Speculation, but coherent speculation.

7 And behold, they met the king of the people who were in the land of Nephi, and in the land of Shilom; and **they were surrounded** by the king's guard, and were taken, and were bound, and were committed to prison.

8 And it came to pass when they had been in prison two days they were again brought before the king, and their bands were loosed; and they stood before the king, and **were permitted, or rather commanded**, that they should answer the questions which he should ask them. That would be a really rough two days. I hope the Book of Mormon can remind us that in our world today, so many are unjustly imprisoned and live in a world where war, torture, and destruction are a daily reality.

9 And he said unto them: Behold, I am **Limhi**, the son of Noah, who was the son of Zeniff, who came up out of the land of Zarahemla to inherit this land, which was the land of their fathers, who was made a king by the voice of the people. Mosiah is a fascinatingly intricate book.

10 And now, I desire to know the cause whereby ye were so bold as to come near the walls of the city, when I, myself, was with my guards without the gate?

11 And now, for this cause have I suffered that ye should be preserved, that I might inquire of you, or else I should have caused that my guards should have put you to death. Ye are permitted to speak. Curiosity saved these men's lives. Stay curious my friends.

12 And now, when Ammon saw that he was permitted to speak, he went forth and bowed himself before the king; and rising again he said: O king, I am very **thankful before God this day that I am yet alive, and am permitted to speak**; and I will endeavor to speak with boldness; This section of the Book of Mormon seems to have some dry humor going on!

13 For I am assured that **if ye had known me ye would not have suffered that I should have worn these bands**. For I am Ammon, and am a descendant of Zarahemla, and have come up out of the land of Zarahemla to inquire concerning our brethren, whom Zeniff brought up out

of that land. **Personal application:** I would submit that if we “truly knew each other” we would not hurt or exploit each other.

14 And now, it came to pass that after Limhi had heard the words of Ammon, he was exceedingly glad, and said: Now, I know of a surety that my brethren who were in the land of Zarahemla are yet alive. And now, I will rejoice; and on the morrow I will cause that my people shall rejoice also.

15 For behold, **we are in bondage** to the Lamanites, and are taxed with a tax which is grievous to be borne. And now, behold, our brethren will deliver us out of our bondage, or out of the hands of the Lamanites, and 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. **Limhi captures the Nephite scouts, but they themselves are in bondage. Note the humility... like the Prodigal Son, Limhi assumes he will be in debt to the Nephites and would rather be in bondage to them than to the Lamanites.**

16 And now, king Limhi commanded his guards that they should no more bind Ammon nor his brethren, but caused that they should go to the hill which was north of Shilom, and bring their brethren into the city, that thereby they might eat, and drink, and rest themselves from the labors of their journey; for they had suffered many things; they had suffered hunger, thirst, and fatigue. **Perspective. How we view others impacts how we treat them. Remember that only four of the sixteen men came to the city; Ammon is now getting the rest.**

17 And now, it came to pass on the morrow that king Limhi sent a proclamation among all his people, that thereby they might gather themselves together to the temple, to hear the words which he should speak unto them.

18 And it came to pass that when they had gathered themselves together that he spake unto them in this wise, saying: O ye, my people, lift up your heads and be comforted; for behold, the time is at hand, or is not far distant, when we shall no longer be in subjection to our enemies, **notwithstanding our many strugglings, which have been in vain; yet I trust there remaineth an effectual struggle to be made.** These words are deeply meaningful to me. This is life. There are many ways we are fighting to escape captivity, fighting to gain greater control and freedom in our lives. Even when we try and fail and try and fail and try and fail there

can remain “an effectual struggle to be made”, especially with change of context.

19 Therefore, **lift up your heads, and rejoice**, and put your trust in God, in that God who was the God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob; and also, that God who brought the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt, and caused that they should walk through the Red Sea on dry ground, and fed them with manna that they might not perish in the wilderness; and many more things did he do for them. **Limhi draws on a redemption/escape story.**

20 And again, that same God has brought our fathers out of the land of Jerusalem, and has kept and preserved his people even until now; and behold, it is because of our iniquities and abominations that he has brought us into bondage. **This was a common idea in Israelite/Jewish culture, a key part of Deuteronomistic theology. It also seems harmfully intuitive that we would think “If bad things happen to me it must be my fault”.**

Understanding why bad things happen is key to knowing how to respond.

21 And ye all are witnesses this day, that Zeniff, who was made king over this people, he being **over-zealous** to inherit the land of his fathers, therefore being deceived by the cunning and craftiness of king Laman, who having entered into a treaty with king Zeniff, and having yielded up into his hands the possessions of a part of the land, or even the city of Lehi-Nephi, and the city of Shilom; and the land round about—

22 And all this he did, for the sole purpose of bringing this people into subjection or into bondage. And behold, we at this time do pay tribute to the king of the Lamanites, to the amount of one half of our corn, and our barley, and even all our grain of every kind, and one half of the increase of our flocks and our herds; and even one half of all we have or possess the king of the Lamanites doth exact of us, or our lives.

23 And now, is not this **grievous to be borne**? And is not this, our affliction, great? Now behold, how **great reason we have to mourn.**

24 Yea, I say unto you, great are the reasons which we have to mourn; for behold how many of our brethren have been slain, and **their blood has been spilt in vain, and all because of iniquity.** **Sounds like in this case Limhi is actually right.**

25 For if this people had not fallen into transgression the Lord would not

have suffered that this great evil should come upon them. But behold, they would not hearken unto his words; but there arose **contentions** among them, even so much that they did shed blood among themselves.

26 And a prophet of the Lord have they slain; yea, a chosen man of God, who told them of their wickedness and abominations, and prophesied of many things which are to come, yea, even the coming of Christ.

27 And because he said unto them that Christ was the God, the Father of all things, and said that he should take upon him the image of man, and it should be the image after which man was created in the beginning; or in other words, he said that man was created after the image of God, and that God should come down among the children of men, and take upon him flesh and blood, and go forth upon the face of the earth—

28 And now, because he said this, they did put him to death; and many more things did they do which brought down the wrath of God upon them. Therefore, who wondereth that they are in bondage, and that they are smitten with sore afflictions?

29 For behold, the Lord hath said: **I will not succor my people in the day of their transgression**; but I will hedge up their ways that they prosper not; and their doings shall be as a stumbling block before them. Usually we are punished by the consequences of our sins, especially if we can remain in tune with our sensitive natures.

30 And again, he saith: If my people shall sow filthiness they shall reap the chaff thereof in the whirlwind; and the effect thereof is poison.

31 And again he saith: If my people shall sow filthiness they shall reap the east wind, which bringeth immediate destruction.

32 And now, behold, the promise of the Lord is fulfilled, and ye are smitten and afflicted.

33 But if ye will turn to the Lord with **full purpose of heart**, and put your **trust** in him, and **serve him with all diligence of mind**, if ye do this, he will, according to his own will and pleasure, deliver you out of bondage. I like this wording—“full purpose of heart” and “all diligence of mind”.

Mosiah 8

1 And it came to pass that after king Limhi had made an end of speaking to his people, for he **spake many things** unto them and only a few of them have I written in this book, he told his people all the things concerning their brethren who were in the land of Zarahemla.

2 And he caused that Ammon should stand up before the multitude, and rehearse unto them all that had happened unto their brethren from the time that Zeniff went up out of the land even until the time that he himself came up out of the land.

3 And he also rehearsed unto them the last words which king Benjamin had taught them, and explained them to the people of king Limhi, so that they might understand all the words which he spake. [Ammon delivered King Benjamin’s sermon.](#)

4 And it came to pass that after he had done all this, that king Limhi dismissed the multitude, and caused that they should return every one unto his own house.

5 And it came to pass that he caused that the plates which contained the record of his people from the time that they left the land of Zarahemla, should be brought before Ammon, that he might read them.

6 Now, as soon as Ammon had read the record, the king inquired of him to know if he could interpret languages, and Ammon told him that he could not.

7 And the king said unto him: Being grieved for the afflictions of my people, I caused that forty and three of my people should take a journey into the wilderness, that thereby they might find the land of Zarahemla, that we might **appeal unto our brethren to deliver us out of bondage.**

8 And **they were lost** in the wilderness for the space of many days, **yet they were diligent**, and found not the land of Zarahemla but returned to this land, having traveled in a land among many waters, having discovered a land which was covered with bones of men, and of beasts, and was also covered with ruins of buildings of every kind, having discovered a land which had been peopled with a people who were as numerous as the hosts of Israel. [Another life summary: “lost but diligent”](#). In a sense we can never

see where we are going, but we can remain diligent and be open to the discoveries and experiences we will have.

9 And for a testimony that the things that they had said are true they have brought **twenty-four plates** which are filled with engravings, and they are of pure gold. **Jaredite records.**

10 And behold, also, they have brought breastplates, which are large, and they are of brass and of copper, and are perfectly sound.

11 And again, they have brought swords, the hilts thereof have perished, and the blades thereof were cankered with rust; and there is no one in the land that is able to interpret the language or the engravings that are on the plates. Therefore I said unto thee: Canst thou translate?

12 And I say unto thee again: Knowest thou of any one that can translate? For I am desirous that these records should be translated into our language; for, perhaps, they will give us a knowledge of a remnant of the people who have been destroyed, from whence these records came; or, perhaps, they will give us a knowledge of this very people who have been destroyed; and I am desirous to know the cause of their destruction. **Good follow up questions.**

13 Now Ammon said unto him: I can assuredly tell thee, O king, of a man that can translate the records; for he has wherewith that he can look, and translate all records that are of ancient date; and it is a **gift from God**. And the things are called interpreters, and no man can look in them except he be commanded, lest he should look for that he ought not and he should perish. And whosoever is commanded to look in them, the same is called **seer**. This reference to “interpreters” is confusing. Joseph Smith mentions them, but we don’t know how they got to Mosiah. Ether 3:22-24 states that two stones are prepared as interpreters, to translate the Jaredite record.

14 And behold, the king of the people who are in the land of Zarahemla is the man that is commanded to do these things, and who has this high gift from God.

15 And the king said that a seer is greater than a prophet.

16 And Ammon said that a seer is a revelator and a prophet also; and a gift which is greater can no man have, except he should possess the power of God, which no man can; yet a man may have great power given him from God. **This conversation feels very academic given the urgent context.**

17 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, and hidden things shall come to light, and things which are not known shall be made known by them, and also things shall be made known by them which otherwise could not be known.

18 Thus God has provided a means that man, through faith, might work mighty miracles; therefore **he becometh a great benefit to his fellow beings**. Good life goal: to become “a great benefit to [our] fellow beings”

19 And now, when Ammon had made an end of speaking these words the king rejoiced exceedingly, and gave thanks to God, saying: Doubtless a great mystery is contained within these plates, and these interpreters were doubtless prepared for the purpose of unfolding all such mysteries to the children of men.

20 O how marvelous are the works of the Lord, and how long doth he suffer with his people; yea, and how blind and impenetrable are the understandings of the children of men; for **they will not seek wisdom, neither do they desire that she should rule over them!** I like how Wisdom is a she (Proverbs 8 contains a marvelous depiction of Wisdom present during creation). This is too often sadly true. We humans don't desire wisdom or guidance. We would rather than confirmation and ease. We would rather feel right than be right.

21 Yea, they are as a wild flock which fleeth from the shepherd, and scattereth, and are driven, and are devoured by the beasts of the forest.

Mosiah 9

I'm used to the preface for this chapter which provides context, but it really does come out of nowhere. Now I am really curious about Zeniff. He is an interesting and complex character. What qualified him to be a spy among the Lamanites? Did he look like a Lamanite?

1 I, Zeniff, having been taught in all the language of the Nephites, and having had a knowledge of the land of Nephi, or of the land of our fathers' first inheritance, and **having been sent as a spy** among the Lamanites that I might spy out their forces, that our army might come upon them and destroy them—but **when I saw that which was good among them I**

was desirous that they should not be destroyed. **Profound personal application!** When we think of others as well, “other” and as enemies, we are willing to destroy them (whether that is literally, or through cruelty and indifference). But when we come to know them and “see that which is good among them” we want to preserve and care for them.

2 Therefore, I contended with my brethren in the wilderness, for I would that our ruler should make a treaty with them; but he being an austere and a blood-thirsty man commanded that I should be slain; but I was rescued by the shedding of much blood; for father fought against father, and brother against brother, until the greater number of our army was destroyed in the wilderness; and we returned, those of us that were spared, to the land of Zarahemla, to relate that tale to their wives and their children. (Omni 1:28 also mentions this leader: And their leader being a strong and mighty man, and a stiffnecked man, wherefore he caused a contention among them; and they were all slain, save fifty, in the wilderness, and they returned again to the land of Zarahemla.). **What a tragedy.**

3 And yet, I being **over-zealous** to inherit the land of our fathers, collected as many as were desirous to go up to possess the land, and started again on our journey into the wilderness to go up to the land; but we were smitten with famine and sore afflictions; for we were slow to remember the Lord our God. **Zeniff frankly acknowledges his flaws.**

4 Nevertheless, after many days’ wandering in the wilderness we pitched our tents in the place where our brethren were slain, which was near to the land of our fathers.

5 And it came to pass that I went again with four of my men into the city, in unto the king, that I might know of the disposition of the king, and that I might know if I might go in with my people and possess the land in peace. **Since he was a spy he has diplomatic skills.**

6 And I went in unto the king, and he covenanted with me that I might possess the land of Lehi-Nephi, and the land of Shilom.

7 And he also commanded that his people should depart out of the land, and I and my people went into the land that we might possess it.

8 And we began to build buildings, and to repair the walls of the city, yea, even the walls of the city of Lehi-Nephi, and the city of Shilom.

9 And we began to till the ground, yea, even with all manner of seeds, with

seeds of corn, and of wheat, and of barley, and with neas, and with sheum, and with seeds of all manner of fruits; and we did begin to multiply and prosper in the land.

10 Now it was the **cunning and the craftiness** of king Laman, to bring my people into bondage, that he yielded up the land that we might possess it.

11 Therefore it came to pass, that after we had dwelt in the land for the space of twelve years that king Laman began to grow uneasy, lest by any means my people should wax strong in the land, and that they could not overpower them and bring them into bondage. **Patience. Talk about a long game.**

12 Now they were a **lazy** and an **idolatrous** people; therefore they were desirous to bring us into bondage, that they might glut themselves with the labors of our hands; yea, that they might feast themselves upon the flocks of our fields. **Laziness and exploitation seem to go together. Righteousness includes wanting to accept responsibility and do our part (think about the teachings of Benjamin).** When we are lazy we want others to do the work that should be ours. I think this often happens in relationships—we don't want to face difficult emotions, tell the truth, own our mistakes etc, so we **put all the blame on others.**

13 Therefore it came to pass that king Laman began to stir up his people that they should contend with my people; therefore there began to be wars and contentions in the land.

14 For, in the thirteenth year of my reign in the land of Nephi, away on the south of the land of Shilom, when my people were watering and feeding their flocks, and tilling their lands, a numerous host of Lamanites came upon them and began to slay them, and to take off their flocks, and the corn of their fields.

15 Yea, and it came to pass that they fled, all that were not overtaken, even into the city of Nephi, and did call upon me for protection.

16 And it came to pass that I did arm them with bows, and with arrows, with swords, and with cimeters, and with clubs, and with slings, and with all manner of weapons which we could invent **(probably meaning they grabbed anything that could be used as a weapon, a sign of their desperation)**, and I and my people did go forth against the Lamanites to

battle.

17 Yea, **in the strength of the Lord** did we go forth to battle against the Lamanites; for I and my people did cry mightily to the Lord that he would deliver us out of the hands of our enemies, for **we were awakened to a remembrance** of the deliverance of our fathers.

18 And God did hear our cries and did answer our prayers; and we did go forth in his might; yea, we did go forth against the Lamanites, and in one day and a night we did slay three thousand and forty-three; we did slay them even until we had driven them out of our land.

19 And **I, myself, with mine own hands, did help to bury their dead**. And behold, to our great sorrow and lamentation, two hundred and seventy-nine of our brethren were slain. *Zeniff shows true leadership here. He reacts to a terrible situation, prepares as much as possible, is engaged at every point, and then keeps working until even the enemy dead are buried (I imagine keeping them unburied would be both a health and animal hazard).*

Mosiah 10

1 And it came to pass that we **again began to establish the kingdom** and we again began to possess the land in peace. And I caused that there should be weapons of war made of every kind, that thereby I might have weapons for my people against the time the Lamanites should come up again to war against my people. *This wording hints to significant damage to the infrastructure. Zeniff learned from this tragedy and is more prepared from then on. Personal application: when we make mistakes or when tragedy befalls us, we can take steps to be better prepared in the future (though of course we can't prevent every accident or tragedy).*

2 And I **set guards** round about the land, that the Lamanites might not come upon us again unawares and destroy us; and thus **I did guard my people and my flocks**, and keep them from falling into the hands of our enemies.

3 And it came to pass that we did inherit the land of our fathers for **many years**, yea, for the space of twenty and two years.

4 And I did cause that the men should till the ground, and raise all manner

of grain and all manner of fruit of every kind.

5 And I did cause that the women should spin, and toil, and work, and work all manner of fine linen, yea, and cloth of every kind, that we might clothe our nakedness; and thus we did **prosper** in the land—thus we did have **continual peace** in the land for the space of twenty and two years.

6 And it came to pass that king Laman died, and his son began to reign in his stead. And he began to stir his people up in rebellion against my people; therefore they began to prepare for war, and to come up to battle against my people. Seems like Laman learned from his mistake as well. No record of communication between Zeniff’s people and the Lamanites who attacked them however.

7 But I had sent my **spies** out round about the land of Shemlon, that I might discover their preparations, that I might guard against them, that they might not come upon my people and destroy them. Zeniff went from spy to king...

8 And it came to pass that they came up upon the north of the land of Shilom, with their numerous hosts, men armed with bows, and with arrows, and with swords, and with cimeters, and with stones, and with slings; and they had their heads shaved that they were naked; and they were girded with a leathern girdle about their loins. This is a pattern made more explicit in the time of Captain Moroni.. the Lamanites are derivative (because of laziness?) copying the preparations that the Nephites had the last time around.

9 And it came to pass that I caused that the women and children of my people should be **hid in the wilderness**; and I also caused that all my old men that could bear arms, and also all my young men that were able to bear arms, should gather themselves together to go to battle against the Lamanites; and I did place them in their ranks, every man according to his age. (This is “last stand” behavior, gambling all your resources on one victory because the alternative would be worse)

10 And it came to pass that we did go up to battle against the Lamanites; and I, even **I, in my old age**, did go up to battle against the Lamanites. And it came to pass that we did go up in the strength of the Lord to battle.

11 Now, the Lamanites knew nothing concerning the Lord, nor the strength of the Lord, therefore they depended upon their own strength. Yet they

were a strong people, as to the strength of men.

12 They were a wild, and ferocious, and a blood-thirsty people, **believing in the tradition of their fathers**, which is this—Believing that **they were driven** out of the land of Jerusalem because of the iniquities of their fathers, and that **they were wronged** in the wilderness by their brethren, and **they were also wronged** while crossing the sea;

13 And again, that **they were wronged** while in the land of their first inheritance, after they had crossed the sea, and all this because that Nephi was more faithful in keeping the commandments of the Lord—therefore he was favored of the Lord, for the Lord heard his prayers and answered them, and he took the lead of their journey in the wilderness.

14 And his brethren were **wroth** with him because they understood not the dealings of the Lord; they were also **wroth** with him upon the waters because they hardened their hearts against the Lord.

15 And again, they were **wroth** with him when they had arrived in the promised land, because they said that he had taken the ruling of the people out of their hands; and they sought to kill him.

16 And again, they were **wroth** with him because he departed into the wilderness as the Lord had commanded him, and took the records which were engraven on the plates of brass, for they said that he robbed them.

17 And thus **they have taught their children that they should hate them**, and that they should murder them, and that they should rob and plunder them, and do all they could to destroy them; therefore they have an eternal hatred towards the children of Nephi. Some profound and sobering insights about human nature here. We believe what we are taught. We are inclined to deny responsibility and blame others. Note the repetition and passive voice. The Lamanites justified their behavior because they focused on what others did. They felt **wronged**. Therefore they were angry. Anger is a secondary emotion, usually covering up hurt or fear. We need to look at our own behaviors.. I fear these patterns play out too often in our lives. I know they have in mine.

18 For this very cause has king Laman, by his cunning, and lying craftiness, and his **fair promises**, deceived me, that I have brought this my people up into this land, that they may destroy them; yea, and we have suffered these many years in the land.

19 And now I, Zeniff, after having told all these things unto my people concerning the Lamanites, I did **stimulate them to go to battle** with their might, putting their trust in the Lord; therefore, we did contend with them, face to face.

20 And it came to pass that we did drive them again out of our land; and we slew them with a great slaughter, even so many that we did not number them.

21 And it came to pass that we returned again to our own land, and my people again began to tend their flocks, and to till their ground.

22 And now I, being old, did confer the kingdom upon one of my sons; therefore, I say no more. And may the Lord bless my people. Amen.

Evidently Zeniff conferred his kingdom on the **WRONG** son. I wonder who his other sons were...

Mosiah 11

1 And now it came to pass that Zeniff conferred the kingdom upon Noah, one of his sons; therefore Noah began to reign in his stead; and **he did not walk in the ways of his father**. Understatement. Also language reminiscent of the Deuteronomistic history.

2 For behold, he did not keep the commandments of God, but he did **walk after the desires of his own heart**. And he had many wives and concubines. And he did cause his people to commit sin, and do that which was abominable in the sight of the Lord. Yea, and they did commit whoredoms and all manner of wickedness. Note the contrast... he did not walk after the ways of his father (representing tradition and wisdom), but walked after his own ways. I am fascinated by how morals and culture evolve over millennia... we ignore this human inheritance at our peril.

3 And he laid a tax of one fifth part of all they possessed, a fifth part of their gold and of their silver, and a fifth part of their ziff, and of their copper, and of their brass and their iron; and a fifth part of their fatlings; and also a fifth part of all their grain.

4 And **all this did he take to support himself**, and his wives and his concubines; and also his priests, and their wives and their concubines; thus

he had changed the affairs of the kingdom. Again, sharp understatement. Noah is an appalling contrast to Benjamin. Everything Noah does is for the benefit of himself and his inner circle.

5 For he put down all the priests that had been consecrated by his father, and consecrated new ones in their stead, **such as were lifted up in the pride of their hearts.** I wonder whether Helam (who I think was Alma's father) was one of Zeniff's priests...

6 Yea, and thus they were **supported in their laziness**, and in their **idolatry**, and in their **whoredoms**, by the taxes which king Noah had put upon his people; **thus did the people labor exceedingly to support iniquity.** Noah is an example of everything NOT to do, representing a low point of human nature. Idolatry is when we put anything ahead of God or the principles of well-being. Labor should support individual and communal thriving, as it did with Benjamin's people. Working hard to support unhealthy behaviors is anti-gospel. Noah is living the Plan of Damnation.

7 Yea, and they also became idolatrous, because they were deceived by the **vain and flattering words** of the king and priests; for they did speak flattering things unto them. Vain words are empty, not followed up by action. Jesus taught that our word should be absolutely binding (Matt. 5:37). Notice that Noah and his priests make the people *feel* better even as they exploit them. Noah's behavior seems very similar to Solomon's (See 1 Kings 5-7).

8 And it came to pass that king Noah built **many elegant and spacious buildings**; and he ornamented them with fine work of wood, and of all manner of precious things, of gold, and of silver, and of iron, and of brass, and of ziff, and of copper;

9 And **he also built him a spacious palace**, and a throne in the midst thereof, all of which was of fine wood and was ornamented with gold and silver and with precious things.

10 And he also caused that his workmen should work all manner of fine work within the walls of the temple, of fine wood, and of copper, and of brass.

11 And the seats which were set apart for the high priests, which were above all the other seats, he did ornament with pure gold; and he caused a

breastwork to be built before them, **that they might rest their bodies and their arms upon while they should speak lying and vain words to his people.**

12 And it came to pass that he built a tower near the temple; yea, a very **high tower**, even so high that he could stand upon the top thereof and overlook the land of Shilom, and also the land of Shemlon, which was possessed by the Lamanites; and he could even look over all the land round about.

13 And it came to pass that he caused many buildings to be built in the land Shilom; and he caused a great tower to be built on the hill north of the land Shilom, which had been a resort for the children of Nephi at the time they fled out of the land; and thus he did do with the riches which he obtained by the taxation of his people.

14 And it came to pass that **he placed his heart upon his riches**, and he spent his time in riotous living with his wives and his concubines; and so did also his priests spend their time with harlots. [Quite the damning summary.](#)

15 And it came to pass that he planted vineyards round about in the land; and he built wine-presses, and made wine in abundance; and therefore he became a wine-bibber, and also his people. ["wine-bibber" sounds funny. Note the repeated theme of how leaders' behavior impacts their followers.](#)

16 And it came to pass that the Lamanites began to come in upon his people, upon small numbers, and to slay them in their fields, and while they were tending their flocks.

17 And king Noah sent guards round about the land to keep them off; but **he did not send a sufficient number**, and the Lamanites came upon them and killed them, and drove many of their flocks out of the land; **thus the Lamanites began to destroy them**, and to exercise their hatred upon them. [Noah makes efforts to protect his people, but they are half-hearted, nowhere near the investment he makes in his own comfort. His priorities are all off. Contrast his father who put everything he had into protecting his people. What was Noah's upbringing like? He must have suffered under the attacks by the Lamanites, even though Zeniff's reign was mostly peaceful apart from those two massive attacks.](#)

18 And it came to pass that king Noah sent his armies against them, and

they were driven back, or they drove them back for a time; therefore, they returned rejoicing in their spoil. Remember this is all Mormon’s commentary. He has disdain for Noah.

19 And now, because of this great victory they were **lifted up in the pride of their hearts**; they did **boast** in their own strength, saying that their fifty could stand against thousands of the Lamanites; and thus they did **boast**, and did **delight in blood**, and the **shedding of the blood of their brethren**, and this because of the wickedness of their king and priests. Pride and boasting. Note the tension of Mormon’s emphasis that it was their *brethren* that they delighted to kill (poignant considering how wicked the people were in Mormon’s time). It is worth pondering the difference between celebrating achievement, excellence, gifts (which I think we should do!) and being “lifted up” and “boasting” which throws us off balance. Noah and his people are set up to fall in a major way.

20 And it came to pass that **there was a man among them** whose name was **Abinadi**; and he went forth among them, and began to prophesy, saying: Behold, thus saith the Lord, and thus hath he commanded me, saying, Go forth, and say unto this people, thus saith the Lord—Wo be unto this people, for I have seen their abominations, and their wickedness, and their whoredoms; and except they repent I will visit them in mine anger. Who is Abinadi? I like my friend KC Kern’s suggestion that Abinadi is Abinadom’s son and Amalaki’s brother (Amalaki tells us that his brother went with Zeniff’s group in Omni 1:30).

21 And except they repent and turn to the Lord their God, behold, I will deliver them into the hands of their enemies; yea, and they shall be brought into **bondage**; and they shall be afflicted by the hand of their enemies.

22 And it shall come to pass that they shall know that I am the Lord their God, and am a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of my people.

23 And it shall come to pass that except this people repent and turn unto the Lord their God, **they shall be brought into bondage**; and none shall deliver them, except it be the Lord the Almighty God.

24 Yea, and it shall come to pass that when they shall cry unto me **I will be slow to hear their cries**; yea, and I will suffer them that they be smitten by their enemies.

25 And except they repent in sackcloth and ashes, and cry mightily to the

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Lord their God, I will not hear their prayers, neither will I deliver them out of their afflictions; and thus saith the Lord, and thus hath he commanded me.

26 Now it came to pass that when Abinadi had spoken these words unto them they were wroth with him, and sought to take away his life; but the Lord delivered him out of their hands.

27 Now when king Noah had heard of the words which Abinadi had spoken unto the people, he was also wroth; and he said: **Who is Abinadi, that I and my people should be judged of him, or who is the Lord, that shall bring upon my people such great affliction? Pinnacle of pride.**

28 I command you to bring Abinadi hither, that I may slay him, for he has said these things that he might stir up my people to anger one with another, and to raise contentions among my people; therefore I will slay him. **Notice Noah invents a plausible reason to capture Abinadi, even though it is made clear in Mosiah 17:12 that Noah won't let Abinadi go because he speaks specifically against him.**

29 Now the eyes of the people were blinded; therefore they hardened their hearts against the words of Abinadi, and they sought from that time forward to take him. And **king Noah hardened his heart against the word of the Lord**, and he did not repent of his evil doings. **Noah also mirrors the Pharaoh in Exodus.**

Additional Reading: Bible Dictionary, “[Seer](#),” 771; “[Urim and Thummim](#),” 786–87.

Bible Dictionary: Seer

Seer

“A seer is a revelator and a prophet also” ([Mosiah 8:15–16](#)), and when necessary he can use the Urim and Thummim or holy interpreters ([Mosiah 8:13](#); [28:16](#)). There have been many seers in the history of God’s people on

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this earth but not so many as there have been prophets. “A seer is greater than a prophet ... and a gift which is greater can no man have ...” ([Mosiah 8:15–18](#)). Joseph Smith is the great seer of the latter days. In addition, the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve are sustained as prophets, seers, and revelators. For other references see [1 Sam. 9:9](#); [2 Sam. 24:11](#); [2 Kgs. 17:13](#); [1 Chr. 29:29](#); [2 Chr. 9:29](#); [33:19](#); [Isa. 29:10](#); [30:10](#); [JST John 1:42](#) (John 1:42 note *a*); [2 Ne. 3:6–14](#); [D&C 21:1](#); [107:92](#); [124:94, 125](#); [127:12](#); [135:3](#); [Moses 6:36, 38](#).

Bible Dictionary: Urim and Thummim

Urim and Thummim

Hebrew term that means “Lights and Perfections.” An instrument prepared of God to assist man in obtaining revelation from the Lord and in translating languages. See [Ex. 28:30](#); [Lev. 8:8](#); [Num. 27:21](#); [Deut. 33:8](#); [1 Sam. 28:6](#); [Ezra 2:63](#); [Neh. 7:65](#); [JS—H 1:35](#).

Using a Urim and Thummim is the special prerogative of a seer, and it would seem reasonable that such instruments were used from the time of Adam. However, the earliest mention is in connection with the brother of Jared ([Ether 3:21–28](#)). Abraham used a Urim and Thummim ([Abr. 3:1–4](#)), as did Aaron and the priests of Israel, and also the prophets among the Nephites ([Omni 1:20–21](#); [Mosiah 8:13–19](#); [21:26–28](#); [28:11–20](#); [Ether 4:1–7](#)). There is more than one Urim and Thummim, but we are informed that Joseph Smith had the one used by the brother of Jared ([Ether 3:22–28](#); [D&C 10:1](#); [17:1](#)). (See *Seer*.) A partial description is given in [JS—H 1:35](#). Joseph Smith used it in translating the Book of Mormon and in obtaining other revelations.

This earth in its celestial condition will be a Urim and Thummim, and many within that kingdom will have an additional Urim and Thummim ([D&C 130:6–11](#)).

Scripture Chain: [N/A](#)
