



THE WITNESS

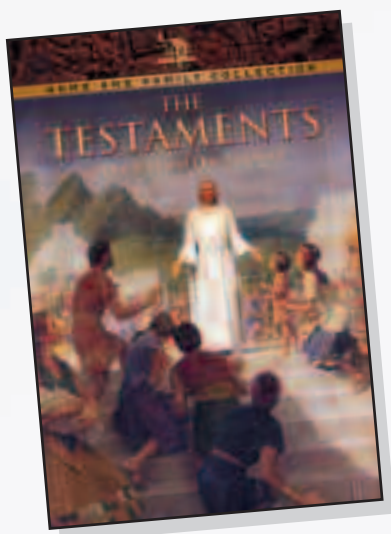
A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION BY THE BOOK OF MORMON FOUNDATION
Number 123 • Summer 2007



"... STRAIT IS
THE GATE AND
NARROW IS THE
WAY THAT LEADS
TO LIFE ..."

Aminadab: From Dissent to Faith	3
Nephi and Lehi, Brothers Taught of the Lord	K2
Annie Learns To Do Good	K4
Young Writers Contest: 1st Place Winner's Story	K6

Cover Scripture: (RLDS 3 Nephi 13:11), [LDS 3 Nephi 27:33]
Cover Photo: Marla Kroesen



THE TESTAMENTS

Of One Fold and One Shepherd

The Book of Mormon Foundation recommends this movie for your viewing enjoyment and as a valuable missionary tool for your personal witness.

This film depicts events from the life and ministry of Jesus Christ as recorded in the New Testament and The Book of Mormon. The story culminates with a portrayal of the resurrected Savior's visit to the ancient Americas as seen through the eyes of a fictional family.

Jesus' ministry to members of His fold in both the Holy Land and the ancient Americas powerfully demonstrates that He is the Good Shepherd of all who hear his voice.

Multiple Languages
65 minutes.

\$5.00

Plus \$3.00 shipping
& handling

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- **President:** Dale Godfrey
- **Vice President:** Rich Rowland
- **Treasurer:** Eldon Anderson
- **Secretary:** Kathy Keller
Marlin Guin

THE WITNESS COMMITTEE

- **Chairperson:** Linda Guin
Dale Godfrey
Marlin Guin
Kathy Keller
Marla Kroesen
Sue Manning
Cheryl Scofield
Beth Spencer
Robert White

- **Designer:** Brenda Eggert

The Book of Mormon Foundation is a nonprofit corporation composed of individuals who desire to promote The Book of Mormon and its witness of Jesus Christ.

Through research, publications, seminars and related projects, members of The Book of Mormon Foundation seek to assist in bringing forth the light contained in The Book of Mormon.

A contribution to The Book of Mormon Foundation is tax deductible. Financials are available upon request.

Articles and the opinions expressed herein do not necessarily represent the view of The Book of Mormon Foundation. Unsigned articles are attributable to the Foundation.

Published quarterly by

The Book of Mormon Foundation

210 West White Oak, Independence, MO 64050
Tel: 816-461-3722 • Fax: 816-461-5850

Foundation E-mail: bmfoundation@sbcglobal.net

Interns E-mail: bminternship@yahoo.com

Website: www.bomf.org



Aminadab:

From Dissent to Faith

by Gary Whiting

The word of God is often spoken of as a two-edged sword.

This image can be used to illustrate the division of the two sides of Lehi's family. The Lamanites and Nephites became divided from one another because of the word of God or more correctly, because of their response to the word of God. The Nephites were originally described as believers in the word of the Lord and the Lamanites were described as those who did not believe. The word of God divided the two sides of this family. They were divided to the blessing of one family and the condemnation of the other.

While the history of these brother nations was often bloody and tragic, at times there were efforts to bridge the gap of difference. When this occurred, it was always the direct result of the influence of the gospel on the hearts of believing people who sought ways to bring blessing to their estranged brethren through the gospel. Such was the motivation for the missionary effort of Lehi and Nephi, the sons of Helaman.

Background

In the years prior to the missionary journey of Nephi and Lehi, the Nephites went through a period of turmoil. Beginning in the 46th year of the reign of the judges, the land was filled with much contention. These difficulties were resolved in time, but even the resulting peace was marred by the activity of a secret combination called the Gadianton robbers. Yet, for a period of time, the church prospered, gaining in members and riches. However, sin and pride entered into the church, and troubles began.

Some church members, those "who professed to belong to the church of God" (Helaman 2:29 RLDS) [Helaman 3:34 LDS], began to persecute other members of the church. Contention simmered for a few years and, finally, in the 54th year of the judges, a split developed in the church. Many of the members became

Yea, we see that whosoever will lay hold upon the word of God which is quick and powerful, which shall divide asunder all the cunning, and the snares, and the wiles of the devil, and lead the man of Christ in a strait and narrow course across that everlasting gulf of misery which is prepared to engulf the wicked, and land their souls, yea, their immortal souls, at the right hand of God, in the kingdom of heaven, to sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and with Jacob, and with all our holy fathers, to go no more out. (Helaman 2:26 RLDS) [Helaman 3:30 LDS]

Aminadab

continued from previous page

so estranged that they defected into Lamanite lands and joined with the Lamanites. This defection followed sharp disagreements and bloodshed.

The dissenters tried to convince the Lamanites to go to war against the Nephites, but were unsuccessful. Two years later, a second party of dissenters arrived and, together with the Nephite dissenters already in the land, they convinced the Lamanites to go to war. During this war, the Nephites suffered the loss of many lives and lost all of their cities and property in the land of Zarahemla.

And thus those dissenters of the Nephites, with the help of a numerous army of the Lamanites, had obtained all the possession of the Nephites which was in the land southward. (Helaman 2:40 RLDS) [Helaman 4:8 LDS]

The Nephite armies initiated a slow, painful and costly campaign to recover the lands lost in the unexpected attack. At the same time, a sober sense of reality settled upon the Nephites. They had gradually fallen into a lazy practice of their religion and made many compromises, while ignoring many practical aspects of their faith.

Now this great loss of the Nephites, and the great slaughter which was among them, would not have happened, had it not been for their wickedness and their abomination which was among them; yea, and it was among those also who professed to belong to the church of God: And it was because of the pride of their hearts, because of their exceeding riches, yea, it was because of their oppression to the poor, withholding their food from the hungry, withholding their clothing from the naked, and smiting their humble brethren upon the cheek, making a mock of that which was sacred, denying the spirit of prophecy and of revelation, murdering, plundering, lying, stealing, committing adultery, rising up in great contentions, and deserting away into the land of Nephi, among the Lamanites. (Helaman 2:44,45 RLDS) [Helaman 4:11,12 LDS]

Nephi and his younger brother, Lehi, began to travel throughout the land, preaching repentance among the people in all the cities of the Nephites. The word of God and the recent afflictions of the Nephites stimulated a process of repentance. After preaching

among all the Nephites, the brothers entered the lands of the Lamanites. (Helaman 2:77, 78 RLDS) [Helaman 5:14-16 LDS]

The brothers first preached throughout the land of Zarahemla, which bordered on the land Bountiful. Beyond the land of Zarahemla lay the land of Nephi. The sons of Helaman preached powerfully among the Lamanites and dissenters with much authority and great success in Zarahemla.

Nephi and Lehi then crossed into the land of Nephi and Lehi were quickly captured by a Lamanite army and thrown in jail. While imprisoned, they faced persecution from both the Lamanites and the Nephite dissenters. However, it was one of those dissenters who played a key role in the success of their missionary effort in the land of Nephi.

Aminadab, a Nephite Dissenter

After being jailed, Nephi and Lehi went without food for several days. At a time appointed by the Lamanites, a large number of men entered the prison, planning to take the lives of these Nephite missionaries. This group consisted of both Lamanites by birth and Nephite dissenters (Helaman 2:91 RLDS) [Helaman 5:27 LDS]. Among the

men who entered the prison that day was a man named Aminadab. He is identified as a Nephite who had once belonged to the church of God. (Helaman 2:99 RLDS) [Helaman 5:35 LDS]

Aminadab was one of many Nephites who abandoned the people of Nephi and became a part of the unbelieving Lamanite nation. These dissenters were people who had been members of the church of God. They had been baptized into the church. They had been taught the gospel and for awhile lived as Christians. But, after entering into a covenant with the Lord, they turned their backs on God and the church body. They became enemies of the church and the gospel. Alma and Amulek, in their missionary journeys many years earlier, had encountered a group of dissenters known as Zoramites. In this account is given a basic definition of a dissenter.

Now the Zoramites were dissenters from the Nephites; therefore they had the word of God preached unto them. But they had fallen into great errors, for they would not observe



MARLA KROESEN

to keep the commandments of God, and his statutes, according to the Law of Moses; Neither would they observe the performances of the church, to continue in prayer and supplication to God daily, that they might not enter into temptation; yea, in fine, they did pervert the ways of the Lord in very many instances; therefore, for this cause, Alma and his brethren went into the land to preach the word unto them. (Alma 16:85-87 RLDS) [Alma 31:8-11 LDS]

Therefore, a dissenter, in The Book of Mormon, was a person who had heard the message of the gospel and failed to observe the requirements of the gospel covenant. The reader is never told why these people began to forsake their faith and, later, their nation. For many of these people, it was probably a gradual process fueled by a lack of diligence in keeping the performances of the church and the Lord's commandments.



They may never have developed more than a distant and impersonal relationship with the Lord Jesus. They may have believed rumors and lies told by others which stressed their faith. They may have been hurt by the careless words of another and rejected the call to forgive. Whatever it may have been that started the freefall from the grace of God, it allowed them the opportunity to fall into the many snares of the devil.

Doubt and confusion about the truth they had been taught began to arise in their hearts, and they grew increasingly contentious. (3 Nephi 5:30 RLDS) [3 Nephi 11:29 LDS] Eventually, having lost the anchor and the rock of their faith, they were washed away into apostasy by the storms of the adversary which came upon them. Having been offered grace, they refused to live in grace, and they fell away into full rebellion against God.

If anyone persists in this kind of rebellion through the remainder of their days in this life, they are in danger of becoming the sons of perdition (Hebrews 6:4-6 IV) [Hebrews 6:4-6 KJV]. Dissenters forfeited their spiritual home and rejected the ministry of God's Spirit.

Now these dissenters, having the same instruction and the same information of the Nephites; yea, having been instructed in the same knowledge of the Lord; nevertheless, it is strange to relate, not long after their dissensions, they became more hardened and impenitent, and more wild, wicked and ferocious, than the Lamanites. (Alma 21:121 RLDS) [Alma 47:36 LDS]

The proof that dissenters had rejected the Holy Ghost is the fact that they shortly become more hard-

ened than even the Lamanites. Luke recorded the words of Jesus about this phenomenon,

He that is not with me, is against me; and he who gathereth not with me, scattereth. When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, it walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, it saith, I will return unto mine house whence I came out. And when it cometh, it findeth the house swept and garnished. Then goeth the evil spirit, and taketh seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in, and dwell there; and the last end of that man is worse than the first.

(Luke 11:24-27 IV)

[Luke 11:23-26 KJV]

These dissensions were damaging to the church and to the nation. They hurt the church by depleting the membership of the church and increasing the number of the enemies the church must face. (Mosiah 11:110 RLDS) [Mosiah 26:5 LDS] Likewise, the nation suffered because of the many instances in which the dissenters were able to stir the flames of hatred in the Lamanite

hearts and cause warfare to break out. The Amalekites, Zoramites and the children of the priests of Noah all did this. (Alma 20:15 RLDS) [Alma 43:13 LDS] There were other groups that had likewise done this. (Alma 21:120 RLDS) [Alma 47:35 LDS] In Nephi and Lehi's day, the dissenters had also caused a war.

Nephi and Lehi's testimony reveals that there is only one sure way to reclaim any dissenter. The only cure to the sin sickness of dissension is the pure and undiluted word of God applied liberally upon those who are sick. Helaman's sons had great success among the Lamanites and the many dissenters in the land of Zarahemla. Moroni writes *that they did confound many of those dissenters who had gone over from the Nephites inasmuch that they came forth and did confess their sins, and were baptized unto repentance, and immediately returned to the Nephites, to endeavor to repair unto them the wrongs which they had done. (Helaman 2:79 RLDS) [Helaman 5:17 LDS]*

The details of Aminadab's story are not recorded. All we know is that he was once a member of God's church, and he cast it all away in favor of living as the Lamanites. This angry man would have become increasingly angry in his heart toward his former brethren in his exile. There can be no doubt that Aminadab was among those in the jail as a way to take revenge on those who had been so offensive to him in the past.

Aminadab

continued from previous page

Aminadab had known the gospel and had once experienced the power of God. Had he previously held a position of ministry in the priesthood? Regardless of what he had known, he had been living with the Lamanites for some time, continually putting down the memories of his early days in the church. Now all he wanted was to continue to believe that the Nephites and their religion, were harsh, unfair and ought to be destroyed.

On the day described in scripture, Aminadab found himself in the prison with other dissenters and a group of Lamanites. Their mission was to take the missionaries and put them to death. (Helaman 2:84 RLDS) [Helaman 5:22 LDS] This was his chance to exact a measure of revenge on those who represented bad memories of his previous life. Little did Aminadab know, that on that day, he would see and hear things he had never imagined possible. That which he despised would again become precious and sweet to his soul.



MARLA KROESEN

Lost Souls Recovered

Aminadab's plan was supernaturally interrupted by the sudden emergence of a ring of fire that completely surrounded the two Nephite brothers. His heart and those of his cohorts were filled with fear. Amazingly, the two Nephites were not affected by the fire, but inside Aminadab, the embers of faith in Jesus Christ were ignited again. Perhaps he thought of the testimonies he had heard of the miraculous escape of Alma and Amulek from the prison in Ammonihah by the power of God and the death of all their persecutors. He may have recalled the testimonies and sermons he had heard of the great power of God. His mind was filled with many thoughts, but he was, like his brethren,



MARLA KROESEN

paralyzed in amazement at the ring of fire.

He felt more like the prisoner at that moment than the Nephite captives as he heard the Nephite men begin to speak,

And it came to pass that Nephi and Lehi did stand forth, and began to speak unto them, saying, Fear not, for behold it is God that has shewn unto you this marvelous thing, in the which is shewn unto you, that ye can not lay your hands on us to slay us. (Helaman 2:89 RLDS) [Helaman 5:26 LDS]

Accompanying the testimony was a sudden and powerful shaking of the prison. It seemed as if the building would surely fall to the ground, but it did not. This was followed by the appearance of a dark cloud that settled upon Aminadab and the others. Then they heard a voice from heaven saying, "Repent ye, repent ye, and seek no more to destroy my servants which I have sent unto you to declare good tidings". (Helaman 2:93RLDS) [Helaman 5:29 LDS]

Again, Aminadab may have recalled the testimony of Alma as the angel appeared unto him while he was in rebellion. Alma had heard the angel warn him to stop seeking the destruction of the church of God. Now, in Aminadab's ears, he heard a voice of heaven saying essentially the same things.

The sound of the voice was followed by a shaking of the earth. Three times this happened. Three times the spirit of God penetrated the hard hearts of the Lamanites and the dissenting Nephites, including Aminadab.

The marvelous display of God's power began to break down all the barriers of unbelief that had been erected in Aminadab's heart. His spirit softened before the Lord and entertained again the truth that God is all-powerful. He must also have realized the Lord could have snuffed out their lives as he had killed the wicked in Ammonihah, but God was extending grace to him. He and his companions were being invited to repent! Perhaps he thought, "I can come back! God's love is again offered to me."

Aminadab and the other “captors” were blinded by the cloud and frozen in their tracks from the fear of God which had gripped their souls. From the record, it appears that the men were in the same position they were in when the cloud appeared. They were in the hands of the living God, and they were powerless before him.

Aminadab, by the power of the faith given him and emboldened by the Spirit of God, was able to turn his head to see the men he had previously persecuted.

And it came to pass that he turned him about, and behold, he saw through the cloud of darkness the faces of Nephi and Lehi; and behold, they did shine exceedingly, even as the faces of angels. And he beheld that they did lift their eyes to heaven; and they were in the attitude as if talking or lifting their voices to some being whom they beheld. (Helaman 2:100,101 RLDS) [Helaman 5:36 LDS]

The events that took place next are a testament to the redeeming grace of God, who has been called “the God of second chances.” Intelligence and wisdom was given to Aminadab. As he viewed Nephi and Lehi, he was given the ability to know they were speaking with angels. He was also given the commandment and privilege of joining with the labor of God and his servants by inviting his brethren to see what he was seeing.

Amazingly, God had chosen to use a once angry, wicked, traitor to the faith of God as a missionary in the midst of the people with whom he had committed many evils. Aminadab could have refused and hardened his heart, but in the face of the degree of power on display, he would likely have been stricken dead. Agency is still at work in the life of even the most hardened, until the Lord ceases to strive with man. Aminadab obeyed the voice of the Lord and led one of the world’s most amazing altar calls ever!

And it came to pass that this man did cry unto the multitude, that they might turn and look. And behold, there was power given unto them, that they did turn and look; and they did behold the faces of Nephi and Lehi. And they said unto the man, Behold, what doth all these thing mean? and who is it with whom these men do converse? Now the man’s name was Aminadab. And Aminadab said unto them, They do converse with the angels of God. And it came to pass that the Lamanites said unto him, What

shall we do, that this cloud of darkness may be removed from overshadowing us? (Helaman 2:102-106 RLDS) [Helaman 5:37-40 LDS]

In a scene that is reminiscent of the preaching of Peter and the disciples on the day of Pentecost, the crowd of men asked Aminadab, “What shall we do?” In Jerusalem, the Jews had asked, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37 IV) [Acts 2:37 KJV] Lamoni’s father had asked, “What shall I do, that I may have this eternal life of which thou hast spoken?” (Alma 13:48 RLDS) [Alma 22:15 LDS] This is the question which the ministry of the Spirit causes to come to the heart and lips of those convinced of the truth of Jesus Christ. It is a question of faith. At this moment, the human heart is primed for repentance, and the seed of the word of God is nigh unto sprouting and taking root in the soul. Here, the servant of God must be led by the same Spirit which has been laboring in the heart of the inquirer. In each of these cases, the seeker heard the same answer and the only appropriate one.

And Aminadab said unto them, You must repent, and cry unto the voice, even until ye shall have faith in Christ, who was taught unto you by Alma, and Amulek, and Zeezrom; and when ye shall do this, the cloud of darkness shall be removed from overshadowing you. And it came to pass that they all did begin to cry unto the voice of him who had shook the earth; yea, they did cry even until the cloud of darkness was dispersed. (Helaman 2:107, 108 RLDS) [Helaman 5:41, 42 LDS]



MARLA KROESEN

The cloud which surrounded them was a representation of the power of God. It testified of God’s holiness and judgment. By this cloud, these men were warned and called to repentance. It is not known why God chose Aminadab to be the spokesman and not some other Nephite.

Perhaps his heart was softer than the others. For whatever reason, it was the wisdom of God and his sovereign power which placed Aminadab and Nephi and Lehi in the Lamanite prison on that day. King Lamoni and his father both led revivals among their people following their being overcome by the Spirit of God.

All of those men in the prison were freed from the cloud of judgment by the grace of God. It was all done because of their faith in Jesus Christ and their repentance, believing that their sins could be removed from them.



DALE GODFREY

And it came to pass that there came a voice unto them, yea, a pleasant voice, as if it were a whisper, saying, Peace, peace be unto you, because of your faith in my well beloved, who was from the foundation of the world. (Helaman 2:112 RLDS) [Helaman 5:46 LDS]

Conclusion

Aminadab's testimony was vital to the success of Nephi and Lehi's mission. None of this took the Lord by surprise, but it probably startled Aminadab somewhat. However, it seems likely that he was struggling with the Spirit of God for quite some time prior to the events in the prison. Like Saul, he was likely "kicking against the pricks" of the Holy Ghost for awhile. In the prison, his unbelief was finally cast away, and he allied himself with the word of truth.

This is a story that ought to encourage everyone who feels they have fallen irretrievably from the Lord's grace and also help those with friends or relatives who appear to be lost. The power of the Lord's redemption is able to claim all who will repent. Many people who knew Aminadab probably wrote him off as a permanent loss to the church, but the Lord recovered him and used him as a part of a great revival in the Lamanite nation.

It is important to note that no event such as this happens independently. If Nephi and Lehi had failed to go into the land of Nephi, Aminadab may never have been renewed to faith. If Alma, Amulek and Zeezrom had never traveled and declared the gospel, Aminadab would never have had an introduction to the gospel.

By some accounts, Aminadab is a small player in the Book of Mormon story. In the written record, he appears and disappears in just a few verses. His influence seems nothing like that of Nephi or Alma. However, his contribution to the gospel is huge. He did, in the jail, just what the Lord asked of him. Furthermore, it appears that he served as a faithful witness of what he saw and heard, and therefore, of the gospel in the land of Nephi. (Helaman 2:114, 115 RLDS) [Helaman 5:49, 50 LDS]

He became a witness for Christ. The church of God experienced great joy because of the many people who came to the Lord among the dissenters and the Lamanites. Aminadab could also rejoice in the salvation of souls that came about. From the account of Aminadab, we can all take courage in that even the smallest contribution to the cause of Christ that is performed in holiness of heart, by faith, is acceptable and pleasing to the Lord.

"And if it so be that you should labor all your days, in crying repentance unto this people, and bring save it be one soul unto me, how great shall be your joy with him in the kingdom of my Father! And now, if your joy will be great with one soul that you have brought unto me into the kingdom of my Father, how great will be your joy, if you should bring many souls unto me! (Section 16:3f, 4a RLDS) [Section 18:15, 16 LDS]

At some point in time, some faithful soul planted the seed of the gospel in the heart of Aminadab. He or she may never have known the fruitfulness of the word in his life, but God knows. The seed was planted and, although its growth was stunted for a number of years and the garden spot was overgrown with weeds and thorns, the Lord nourished the seed. We are asked to distribute the word liberally, and God oversees the watering and nourishment of the seed.

Aminadab's testimony and labor laid the foundation for one of the greatest Book of Mormon prophets, Samuel. Samuel the Lamanite would be sent to prophesy to the Nephites some 23 years later, revealing the signs of the birth and death of Jesus Christ, the Messiah. (Helaman 2:125; 5:1 RLDS) [Helaman 6:6; 13:1 LDS] Samuel's gospel heritage lay in the preaching of Lehi and Nephi and the repentance and obedience of a man named Aminadab.

Aminadab is a small character in the The Book of Mormon whose life illustrates what can go wrong in the life of man who was taught the gospel. He also illustrates the power and infinite mercy of God to restore a sinner to righteousness. How potent is the blood of the Lamb in washing away the sins of the world!



Study Guide

1 What other efforts in the Nephite/Lamanite history were made to preach the gospel to the unbelieving nation? Why was this done?

2 What effect and responsibility does the church of Christ have in the success and prosperity of a nation?

3 What is the scriptural definition of a dissenter?

4 What is the antidote for dissension in the church?

5 What were the sins of the church membership that gave rise to a spirit of dissension in its ranks?

6 Are you on a course for blessing or hard-heartedness and dissension? What can you do to prevent a spirit of dissension in your soul?

7 What do you think would have been your thoughts and feelings if you were Aminadab that day in the prison? Why?

8 Read Genesis 6:67-70 in the Inspired Version. Does Aminadab's experience contain any useful "types and shadows" for us in understanding these days that are shortly to come?

9 What is the key to salvation, as described by Aminadab?

10 What practical points of application does the story of Aminadab reveal to you? How can his testimony change your life?

Book of Mormon 2008 Calendar

Enjoy your favorite Book of Mormon stories all year long with 13 keepsake-quality paintings. You'll want to prominently display this beautiful and functional piece in your home or office. Scripture references printed on the calendars are LDS references.

To place your order, contact:

The Book of Mormon Foundation

at (816) 461-3722

or e-mail at

bmfoundation@sbcglobal.net

or write to:

210 W. White Oak, Indep., MO 64063

Also available:

The Book of Mormon Chapter & Verse:

RLDS – LDS Conversion Table

\$3.00

You will be invoiced for your order including shipping and handling.

12" x 12"

\$15.95

6" x 6"

\$7.95



2007 Pacific Northwest Book of Mormon Workshop



**Vancouver
Restoration Branch**
2602 NW 151st St.,
Vancouver, WA

Friday, September 14, 2007
7:00 PM to 9:00 PM

Saturday, September 15, 2007
9:00 AM to 7:00 PM
(lunch and supper breaks included)

Sunday, September 16, 2007
9:00 AM to 12:00 PM

(Pre-registration required)

SPONSORED BY:

THE BOOK OF MORMON FOUNDATION
Independence, Missouri

The Book of Mormon Foundation is an independent organization teaching the message of Jesus Christ through The Book of Mormon.

- **Book of Mormon Studies**
- **Prophecies of the Latter Days**
- **Recent Archaeological Developments**

REGISTRATION FORM

Name(s) _____

Names and ages of children who will be attending _____

Address _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

You will be responsible for taking care of your own food and lodging. Minimum number of registrations are required.

Mail to: The Book of Mormon Foundation, 210 West White Oak, Independence, Missouri 64050

Young Writer's Contest



The Young Writer's Contest 1st place winner is Katelyn Mercer. She is 13 years old and will be entering the eighth grade at Center Place Restoration School. Katelyn attends Oak Grove Restoration Branch. She lives in Bates City and has three sisters. Katelyn was presented with a \$25 gift certificate.

Nephi's Zion

By Katelyn Mercer

"And it came to pass that while my father tarried in the wilderness he spake unto us, saying, 'Behold, I have dreamed a dream; or in other words, I have seen a vision.'" (1 Nephi 2:41 RLDS) [1 Nephi 8:8 LDS] I leaned over Nephi's shoulder to get a look at what he was writing now, but he had shifted his position, and his broad shoulders blocked my view.

"Nephi, I can't see! Can you move?"

"Please?"

"Please, Nephi! I really want to know what you're writing!"

"I'm writing Father's vision. Why do you need to see? You were there when he told us about it!"

"But I can't remember it all!" I didn't need to say that, but Nephi had already shifted his body so I could see. "Nephi, how come you and Laman are so different? You were both raised the same."

"You were different than Laman, too, and you were raised the same," Nephi replied.

"Yes, but??"

"No buts. You know God gave us agency. That means Laman can be whatever he wants."

"Is that like Zion? Will people in Zion be like Laman?"

"No, not from what I understand. I think Zion will be like Father's tree, perfect beyond anything we've ever known. The people will all be beautiful, because we'll see their spirits, not their bodies. Now, I don't have anything to back that up, that's just my

thoughts. But I think it will be the best thing ever. I can't even picture how beautiful it will be!"

"Nephi, I want to go there. How can I do that?"

"Do you remember most of Father's vision?"

I nodded my head yes. "Good. The rod of iron is the word of God. Remember how if you didn't hold on you would be lost? You will be lost without God's guidance. He gives us guidance on how to get to Zion through his word. The rod leads you to God's love. Do you remember when I went to get these plates?" I nodded my head yes again. "Do you know why I did that?" This time I shook my head no.

"I went because I knew how much God loved me, how much he cared about me. Who am I that the Lord of all the earth would care to know my name, to care to feel my hurt? I wanted to do something for him. Getting these plates was that something. Obeying his commandments could be that something for you."

"I remember Father saying something about when we obey all God's commandments, Zion will come," I said.

"Exactly, but not just you, everyone on earth has to. But it can start right now, with you."

I looked back over his shoulder. He had been writing the whole time we'd been talking. He had lots more.

"And it came to pass that I beheld that the rod of iron, which my father had seen, was the word of God, which led to . . . the tree of life. And I also beheld that the tree of life was a representation of the love of God."

(1 Nephi 3:68-69 RLDS) [1 Nephi 11:25 LDS]

CODED MESSAGE ANSWER: PEACE, PEACE BE UNTO YOU, BECAUSE OF YOUR FAITH IN MY WELL BELOVED, WHO WAS FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD.

Annie Learns To Do Good



by Alicia Sindt

Annie shut the closet door and unwrapped the cherry sucker in the dark. It was sweet and sticky and just tart enough to be delicious. Annie thought about how unfair her brother Jeffery was. Grandma Webb had sent a dozen of the special suckers to Jeff for his birthday. That birthday had been a week ago, and Jeff hadn't shared one of them yet. Inside, Annie was hot and still and mad about it. She had asked Mom and Dad to make Jeff share with her, but they didn't. They said it was Jeff's present, and it was up to him whether or not to share.

Annie's eyes filled with tears as she thought of how Jeffery had told her no. She told him that Jesus said that you were supposed to share with your sister. Jeffery had told her that Jesus had said she wasn't supposed to covet things that did not belong to her. And then Jeff had said that sharing didn't include sharing suckers.

After that, she didn't exactly remember what was said or what she did. She did remember that she had called him a sinner and that he wasn't going to live with Jesus in heaven. About that time, Mom had shown up and each of them had been punished. And still, Mom hadn't made Jeff share with her.

Annie licked the sucker again. She had snuck it out of Jeff's room while he was doing chores and hid it in her suitcase. Now that she was at Grandma and Grandpa Netter's house, she was finally able to enjoy the sucker. She wondered if it was right to take Jeff's sucker. She quickly stuffed that thought away. If Jeff had done what was right and shared, she wouldn't

have had to take the sucker anyway. It didn't even taste very good anymore. It seemed as if the taste was off somehow. And it was stinging her tongue a little now.

Annie heard the muffled sound of Grandma Netter calling to her. She wrapped the sucker back in its waxed paper and crept from the closet to put it back inside her suitcase. She went down the stairs and into Grandma's kitchen.

"Did you need me, Grandma?" Annie asked.

"Yes, I wanted you to take these potato peelings out to feed the chickens. Your grandpa is still outside doing chores and supper will be ready soon." Grandma gave her the bucket half-full of potato skins. Grandma looked closely at Annie's face. "Honey, are you feeling well?" Grandma felt her forehead. "Your face is red and hot. Do you have a fever?"

Annie shook her head. "No, I feel fine. I'll take these out to Grandpa."

Annie ducked out the door and headed for the chicken house. She could hear Grandpa singing "The Old, Old Path." She thought it was odd that her tongue felt even itchier now. Her arms were starting to feel itchy also.

Grandpa was busy putting a staple in the chicken wire.

"What are you doing, Grandpa?" Annie asked.

The old man looked up from the repair to smile at his granddaughter. "I'm fixing this hole. What have you got there?"

"Grandma sent these peelings out to the chickens."

Annie peered at his work.

"How did that hole get there?" Annie bent a piece of the wire toward the pole.

"Chickens like to scratch and lean on the wire.

After a while, the staple gives way, and the next thing you have is a hole." Grandpa picked up the hammer and another of the large staples.



"This hole doesn't look too big to me, Grandpa. It's still smaller than a chicken can get through. Couldn't you wait to fix it until it's bigger?" Annie watched as he drove another staple into the pole, and she scratched at her arm.

"Not really. See, the chickens will make the hole bigger, and they will get out of the pen. That's just how chickens are. If I wait until the chickens are running around the yard, the dogs will probably eat at least one or two of them. It's better to make the chicken wire secure and keep both the dogs and the chickens out of trouble." Grandpa pounded the last staple in place.

Annie looked at Bo Dog. He looked sleepy, like he would never chase or kill a chicken. Just then, Bo's eyes focused hard on the chickens. Annie gasped just a little. He would kill a chicken if he could. She could see that in his eyes. He even looked like he would think it was fun.

"Why don't you get rid of the dogs so the chickens will be safe?" Annie asked.

"The chickens are safe as long as they follow the rules and stay in their pen. I keep the pen secure to help them follow those rules. Bo doesn't ever dig around their pen. He only gets them if the chickens get out. Besides, if Bo wasn't here then foxes or coyotes would get the chickens instead. The chickens are safe only when they stay inside the fence." Grandpa put the hammer back in the bucket with the staples and sat back on his heels.

"You see Annie, we are much like the chickens. We are surrounded by God's love and protection. Only for us, the commandments in the scriptures are like the fence. We get stubborn like the chickens, and we push at the boundaries the Lord has set around us with the commandments. Sometimes we even leave the boundary of His commandments like the chickens push out of the pen. Instead of Bo Dog waiting to eat us, Satan is waiting to destroy our souls."

Annie scratched at the itchy spots on her arms and wiggled as something was itching her back now, too. "What happens if one of the other chickens is bad and it makes the other chickens leave the pen?"

Grandpa stared at Annie's arms for a second. Then he answered. "It doesn't work like that, Annie. One chicken may push at the pen and even make the hole. But every chicken makes its own choice to leave the safety of the pen. Just like one person may say bad things about the Lord's commandments and try to convince people that the commandment is wrong or doesn't apply anymore. But every person decides whether to sin by themselves."

Grandpa took Annie's hand and turned it to get a better look at her arm. "But Grandpa, there is a big world out here for the chickens to explore. If it weren't for the dog they would be happier out here than in the coop."

Grandpa looked her in the eye. "It is a big world

outside of the Lord's commandments. But there is a devil, and he will more surely catch you when you sin than Bo will catch a chicken who leaves the coop. Alma told his son, Corianton 'Wickedness never was happiness.' (Alma 19:73 RLDS) [Alma 41:10 LDS].

You see, Corianton had gone on a missionary trip with his father. Corianton left the safety of the Lord's commandments and sinned. Because Corianton sinned, many people would not believe Alma when he preached about the Lord. So Corianton was like a chicken that had pushed a hole in the fence and clucked for the other chickens to leave the safety and follow him. Many people did, and they lost their souls for it. Because Corianton returned to his father, we have the words of Alma to him. Alma had to explain to his son how the son's sins had caused harm to the people and harm to himself. "It is never happiness to discover that you have done wrong and that not only you but others will suffer because of your wrong."

Annie, you are covered in spots. What have you gotten into?

Annie looked at the red bumps on her arms. "I don't know, Grandpa. They itch though."

"Annie, you have red all around your mouth too. What have you been eating?"

Annie thought about lying about the sucker, but she looked into Grandpa's eyes and saw how much he loved her. In that moment, she knew she had been wrong to take Jeff's sucker. In that moment, she knew she had been wrong to say those mean things to

him. In that moment she knew that she was the real sinner. Jeff may have pushed a hole in the fence by not sharing, but she had stolen the sucker out of her own free will. In that moment, she knew what Grandpa had said was true, "Wickedness was not happiness."

A tear slid out of her eye. "Grandpa, I have done something wrong. I stole one of Jeff's suckers, and I should not have done it."

Annie's evening was not what she had planned. There was the phone call to her parents and medicine for the hives that soon covered her body. There were apologies to her parents and her brother for doing wrong. Her mother read the ingredient list on the sucker and discovered that the formula had changed. The sucker now had a dye that Annie was allergic to. If she hadn't taken the sucker, none of this would have happened. Her trip to her grandparents was much shorter than she had expected.

As she closed her eyes to sleep in her own bed, she pondered the words of Alma that her Grandpa had shared. "Wickedness never was happiness." They were so true. She had pushed out the safety of God's commandments and had hives to show for it. Now back in the safety of His words again, and she vowed she would always do what was right in the future.





NEPHI AND LEHI, BROTHERS TAUGHT OF THE LORD

By Andrea Alaniz

Photos by Marla Kroesen

Wherefore I beseech you, brethren, that ye should search diligently in the light of Christ, that ye may know good from evil; and if ye will lay hold upon every good thing, and condemn it not, ye certainly will be a child of Christ. (Moroni 7:18 RLDS) [Moroni 7:19 LDS]

Nephi had been taught the ways of the Lord very well by his father. Before Nephi's father, Helaman, died, he spoke to him and his younger brother, Lehi, "Behold I have given you the names of our first parents, which came out of the land of Jerusalem, and I have done this so when you remember your names you will remember them. And when you remember them you may remember their works. And when you remember their works you may know that it is said and also written that they were good. Therefore my sons I want you to do that which is good, that it may be said of you and also written even as it has been said and written of them." He also spoke many more things to his sons, such as laying up treasure in heaven, because the precious gift of eternal life doesn't fade away.

Helaman asked them to keep the commandments of God and to preach them to the people. And it came to pass that Nephi and Lehi did preach with great power insomuch that many Nephites who had fallen into sin confessed their sins and were baptized unto repentance. Nephi and Lehi did also preach unto the Lamanites with great power and authority, for they had power and authority given unto them that they might speak, and they also had what they should speak given unto them. The Lamanites were so astonished at their words that they were convinced of the wickedness and of the traditions of their fathers, insomuch that 8000 of them were baptized unto repentance.

As Nephi and Lehi traveled on to preach to more Lamanites in other areas of the land, they were taken by an army of the Lamanites and cast into prison. After they had been in prison many days without food, the Lamanites came in to take them so they might slay them. Just

then, Nephi and Lehi were circled about as if by fire, so much that the Lamanites would not lay their hands on them for fear they might be burned. Nevertheless, Nephi and Lehi were not burned, and they were standing in the midst of the fire. When they saw they were encircled by a pillar of fire and weren't burned, their hearts took courage, for they saw the Lamanites stood as if they were struck dumb with amazement.

Nephi and Lehi began to speak to them saying, "Fear not! For behold, it is God that has shown you this marvelous thing which is shown unto you that you cannot lay your hands on us to slay us." When they said this, the earth began to shake exceedingly and the walls of the prison shook as if they were about to tumble to the earth, but they did not fall.

It came to pass that the Lamanites and the Nephites which were dissenters were overshadowed with a cloud of darkness, and they became very afraid. And a voice came, as if it were above the cloud of darkness, saying, "Repent ye, repent ye! And seek no more to destroy thy servants which I have sent unto you to declare good tidings!" The voice was a still voice of perfect mildness, as if it had been a whisper, and it pierced them even to their very souls.

The earth began to shake again, and the walls of the prison trembled as if they were going to tumble to the earth, and the cloud of darkness which overshadowed them did not leave. And the voice came again saying, "Repent ye, repent ye! For the kingdom of heaven is at hand and seek no more to destroy my servants!"

And the earth shook again and the walls trembled, and again the third time the voice came and spoke unto them marvelous words which cannot be uttered by man. And the walls trembled again and the earth shook as if it were about to divide under them, but the Lamanites didn't flee because of the cloud of darkness which hung over them. They couldn't move because of the fear which came upon them.



19
5
4
24
4
9
4
9
2
20
5
1
7
2
6
2
5
24
4
4
5
16
21
4
5
6
2
2
17
2
1
7
2
1
7
2
1
7
2
17
2
1
7
2

Now there was one among them, Aminadab, who was a Nephite by birth, who had once belonged to the church of God but had dissented from them. He turned around and saw through the cloud of darkness the faces of Nephi and Lehi, and their faces shone exceedingly even as the face of an angel. He saw that Nephi and Lehi lifted their faces to heaven and were lifting their voices to the being which they beheld. Then Aminadab cried to the people in the prison to turn and look, and they were given power to turn and look. And they saw the faces of Nephi and Lehi and they asked Aminadab, "What do all of these things mean? And who is it that they are talking with?"

Aminadab said to them, "They converse with the angels of God."

And the Lamanites said to him, "What should we do so that this cloud of darkness may be removed from overshadowing us?"

And Aminadab said to them, "You must repent and cry unto the voice even until you have faith in Christ, and when you do this the cloud of darkness shall be removed from overshadowing you."

They all began to cry to the voice of Him who shook the earth. They cried unto God even until the cloud of darkness was gone. When they saw the cloud of darkness was gone from overshadowing them, they saw that they were encircled about, every soul, by a pillar of fire.



And Nephi and Lehi were in the midst of them, and they were encircled about as if they were in the midst of a flaming

fire, yet it did not harm them or burn the walls. They were filled with a joy that is unspeakable and full of glory. The Holy Spirit of God came down from heaven and entered their hearts and they were filled as with fire and they could speak marvelous words.

And they heard a pleasant voice, as if it were a whisper, speak to them, saying, "Peace, peace be unto you because of your faith in my well-beloved which was from the foundation of the world."

When they heard this, they looked up and saw the heavens open and angels came down out of heaven and ministered to them. There were about 300 people which saw and heard these things. They were told to go forth and



marvel not. Neither should they doubt. The people went out to all the regions around them and shared the things which they had heard and seen, and because of their words many more Lamanites were brought unto repentance.

Nephi and Lehi continued preaching throughout the land. Because Nephi declared the word of God to the people with such dedication, and without fear or becoming weary, God told Nephi in the presence of His angels that He would do whatever Nephi asked of Him. If Nephi told a mountain to come down and be made smooth, it would be done. God blessed Nephi for walking in the ways his father had taught him, keeping the commandments. Because Nephi and Lehi had faith in Christ and sought only the will of the Lord, and not their own, many marvelous things were done.

This record is such a wonderful testimony of the amazing blessings God can give us when we have faith. Nephi and Lehi's father taught them to seek to do that which is good, they followed his wishes and God showed favor on them because of it. If we seek to do good God desires to pour out his blessings on us as well.

23
1
20
9
19
4
15
21
11
2
9
4
5
16
8
1
21
3
4
16
4
9
21
11
2
23
4
19
14
8

Crack the code to discover the message given to the captors of Nephi and Lehi when they repented.

Key: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24
A E I O U B C D F G H J K L M N P Q R S T V W Y

Answer on page K6.



Nonprofit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Independence, MO
Permit No. 123

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED
INDEPENDENCE, MO 64050
210 WEST WHITE OAK
THE BOOK OF MORMON FOUNDATION

I WITNESS Kids

