

Sam, the Son of Lehi

by Gary Whiting

The opening pages of the Book of Mormon describe the faith and struggles of the prophet Lehi as seen through the eyes of his son, Nephi. Nephi describes his family's departure from Jerusalem and the trial of their long journey to the Promised Land. Through the pages of Nephi's spiritual journey, the family and friends of Lehi are introduced. As the story begins, Lehi has four sons: Laman, Lemuel, Sam and Nephi. The first introduction of the family is given by Nephi shortly after they left the land of Jerusalem.

And he did travel in the wilderness with his family which consisted of my mother Sariah, and my elder brethren, who were Laman, Lemuel, and Sam. (1 Nephi 1:32RLDS) [1 Nephi 2:5 LDS]

Sam was the third oldest and least-known son of Lehi. Laman and Lemuel are known for their hard hearts and complaining spirits. Nephi is famous for his great faith, many revelations and his suffering faithfully many persecutions at the hands of Laman and Lemuel. Two more sons were born in the wilderness: Jacob, an author in The Book of Mormon and great preacher and minister to the Nephites; and Joseph, known for the glorious blessing and prophecy uttered over him by Lehi. (2 Nephi 2:1-50 RLDS) [2 Nephi 3:1-25 LDS] But who was Sam?

The majority of the Book of Mormon story concerns the families of the descendants of Lehi, Ishmael and Zoram. In this scriptural epoch, the children of Lehi and the others of the traveling party to the Promised Land have established their own legacy — some in honor, while others are known for their disobedience.

Now the people which were not Lamanites, were Nephites; nevertheless, they were called Nephites, Jacobites, Josephites, Zoramites, Lamanites, Lemuelites, and Ishmaelites. But I, Jacob, shall not hereafter distinguish them by these names, but I shall call them Lamanites, that seek to destroy the people of Nephi; and those who are friendly to Nephi, I shall call Nephites, or the people of Nephi, according to the reigns of the kings. (Jacob 1:13-14; see also 4 Nephi 1:40-42; Mormon 1:8 RLDS) [Jacob 1:13-14, see also 4 Nephi 1:36-38, Mormon 1:8 LDS]

Each of the sons of Lehi had families that developed into tribes known by the name of the son who fathered them. Thus the tribal names were Lamanites, Lemuelites, Nephites, Jacobites and Josephites. Even Zoram (Zoramites) and Ishmael (Ishmaelites) had their names attached to tribal families. However, never in the Book of Mormon is a tribe named after Sam. Why is this?

Although he is somewhat of a mystery, Sam's life and faith are a valuable source of instruction for each of us. In the glimpses of his life provided in the Book of Mormon, we are shown the qualities and characteristics of a man of faith, humility and great loyalty. We have much to learn from Sam, the son of Lehi.

WHO WAS SAM?

The dates of his birth and death are unknown. While we cannot know with certainty the age of anyone in Lehi's family, we can safely assume that Sam was at least a young adult at the time his family left Jerusalem. He married one of the daughters of Ishmael shortly after the wilderness journey began. He was thus physically mature enough to raise a family (1 Nephi 5:7 RLDS) [1 Nephi 16:7 LDS] at the beginning of the trip to the Promised Land.

Nephi neared his death 55 years after leaving Jerusalem. (Jacob 1:1 RLDS) [Jacob 1:1 LDS] We know that Nephi was "exceeding young" and was of "large stature" (1 Nephi 1:47, 135 RLDS) [1 Nephi 2:16, 4:31 LDS] when the family left the land of Jerusalem. It seems that Nephi would have been in his "teens" to fit the descriptions given. Sam, obviously, was older than Nephi, but his exact age is not known.

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We can surmise from Nephi's testimony that Sam, who had the same goodly parents, was also "taught somewhat in all the learning" of his father, Lehi. (1 Nephi 1:1 RLDS) [1 Nephi 1:1 LDS] Therefore, Sam was educated both in the skills of his father as well as in the religious beliefs of Lehi and Sariah. Lehi was careful to tell his children the things which God had revealed to him. Sam and his brothers heard Lehi's descriptions of the visions which inspired him to preach and prophesy to the people of Jerusalem. (1 Nephi 1:16 RLDS) [1 Nephi 1:16 LDS]

Lehi was apparently quite wealthy. It is recorded that he left behind gold, silver, land, a house and other precious things when he left Jerusalem. (1 Nephi 1:29 RLDS) [1 Nephi 2:4 LDS] While growing up, Sam and his brothers probably didn't lack for what they needed at any time. In fact, it was the land and wealth which continually tempted Laman and Lemuel to return to Jerusalem. (e.g., 1 Nephi 1:38 RLDS) [e.g., 1 Nephi 2:11 LDS] It seems safe to assume that Sam and his brothers did not suffer the hardships of poverty, while living in the land of Jerusalem. It would have been common for them to learn the basic skills of hard work, doing chores and developing skills to take over the family business or to strike out later on their own business affairs.

What conclusions can be made about Sam from this brief review of his beginnings? First, he had no special advantages or disadvantages compared to his brothers. At the beginning of Nephi's account, Sam had achieved young manhood and was capable of making his own decisions and had the training and opportunity to know right from wrong. It is likely that he had inherited a physical frame that resembled his other brothers. So like Nephi, he could easily have been of a large stature. Therefore, all the requirements to be a learned, capable and righteous man were available to Sam, as they were to each of his brothers.

SAM AND HIS BROTHERS

Much of what is known about Sam is revealed in his interactions with his brothers. Indirectly, by observing these interactions, it is possible to discover the personality and faith of Sam and his character.

Sam's two older brothers, Laman and Lemuel, were an inseparable pair. Laman, being the oldest, was often the spokesman for Lemuel and those that agreed with them. Laman is also shown to be the instigator of rebellion against Lehi and Nephi. The two older brothers seemed to have their eyes set only on their physical comfort and personal gain. They were even willing to commit murder in order to prevent their own inconvenience. (1 Nephi 1:43; 2:27 RLDS) [1 Nephi 2:13, 7:16 LDS] Sam could easily have fallen under the influence of his older brethren, but he did not. Why?

It may be that there was a significant age difference

between Sam and his older brothers and that Nephi was closer in age to him. Nephi does write that Sam was his elder brother. Laman and Lemuel spoke of Sam and Nephi as their younger brothers, as if there was a significant difference of several years in their ages. If so, Sam would naturally be drawn more toward Nephi rather than the older boys. (1 Nephi 1:32; 2 Nephi 4:8 RLDS) [1 Nephi 2:5, 2 Nephi 5:6 LDS]

Sam is always shown as a supporter and friend to Nephi. There is not a single recorded event in which Sam is named as being against Nephi. Sam is never named as complaining to Nephi or to the Lord. Even when Lehi and Sariah had periods of unbelief and grumblings against the Lord in their hardship, Sam is never specifically mentioned as doing this.

The available evidence shows that Sam supported Nephi even in the worst of circumstances. For instance, when Nephi was beaten by his older brothers, Sam was also beaten.



Wherefore, Laman and Lemuel did speak many hard words unto us, their younger brothers, and they did smite us with a rod. (1 Nephi 1:92 RLDS) [1 Nephi 3:28 LDS]

Nephi records that when Laman, Lemuel and the sons of Ishmael rebelled against him, Sam stood with him.

And it came to pass that as we journeyed in the wilderness, behold Laman and Lemuel, and two of the daughters of Ishmael, and two sons of Ishmael, and their families, did rebel against us; yea, against I, Nephi, and Sam, and their father Ishmael, and his

wife, and his three other daughters. (1 Nephi 2:12 RLDS) [1 Nephi 7:6 LDS]

One author has written that Sam was "quiet and unassuming" and one who "seemed to back away from decisions."¹ There does not seem to be evidence that Sam was afraid to make hard choices. Sam was courageous at times where many people reveal their cowardice. Sam was a true brother and friend to Nephi, his younger brother. His apparent quietness may be more a function of the fact that we are reading Nephi's writing, which was not intended to be biographical.

Sam did not think in terms of age, rights and personal convenience. He responded to the grace of God and was willing to honor the calling of God that was given to Nephi. No apparent conflict or jealousy existed between the two younger brothers. Sam's support of Nephi during the hard times demonstrates a great deal of love and loyalty.

One should not underestimate the importance of the strength and encouragement that Sam would have given to Nephi. When Nephi declared the truth he had learned from God, Laman and Lemuel were never happy about it. They scoffed at him, lied about his motives, beat him, tied him up and opposed him in every possible way. In contrast, Sam listened to Nephi, believed what he said, followed Nephi's leadership and encouraged him to continue to do what the Lord asked of him.

And I spake unto Sam, making known unto him the

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things which the Lord had manifested unto me by his Holy Spirit. And it came to pass that he believed my words. (1 Nephi 1:49-50 RLDS) [1 Nephi 2:17 LDS]

To a younger brother faced with family persecution, it must have been very important for Nephi to receive the support of one of his older brothers. Latter day revelation commands the missionaries to travel two by two. There are many good reasons for this, but one of the benefits is to have a friend and companion close at hand. We need to be able to tell someone our joys and our sorrows. How important was Silas to Paul in the jail at Philippi (Acts 16) or Amulek to Alma in Ammonihah? (Alma 6:10 RLDS) [Alma 8:9 LDS] Sam is that important friend and companion to Nephi.

It can be concluded that Sam had a believer's heart and thus, was not given to unbelief and hardness of heart. He was loved, fond of his younger brother, and they are always shown as aligned in will and action.

SAM'S FAITH

Lehi and Sariah were, undoubtedly, an important reason for Sam's faith. When the Book of Mormon introduces Lehi, we are shown a man of great faith. This picture, combined with Nephi's testimony of "goodly parents" suggests that Lehi and Sariah's faith was strong and that it was communicated to their children. It seems reasonable to assume Sam grew up in a home where the scriptures were taught and faith in God was regularly encouraged. Sam's parents laid the foundation for Sam's faith.

From this very solid foundation the Lord continued to build a strong and vital faith in the heart of Sam. This is first shown after Nephi had prayed for wisdom about his father's testimony. Nephi went to Sam and told him all he had learned from the Holy Ghost. The record simply states, "And it came to pass that he believed in my words." (1 Nephi 1:50 RLDS) [1 Nephi 2:17 LDS] This implies that Sam had discernment, an interest in the things of the Spirit and a soft heart. His response to Nephi's words was full acceptance while the older brethren would not believe. Nephi included his brother Sam as one of the people "who believed in the warnings and the revelations of God." (2 Nephi 4:9 RLDS) [2 Nephi 5:6 LDS] Sam may be an example of one who has the faith to believe the testimony of another. This is a gift of the Spirit of God and indicates that Sam was born of the Spirit.

Lehi gives us another clue to Sam's faith. In his description of the vision of the rod of iron, Lehi describes seeing Sam, Nephi and Sariah among those seeking the path of righteousness. Lehi takes great joy and comfort in this knowledge.

And behold, because of the thing which I have seen, I have reason to rejoice in the Lord because of Nephi, and also of Sam; for I have reason to suppose that they, and also many of their seed, will be saved. (1 Nephi 2:42 RLDS) [1 Nephi 8:3 LDS]

This is another piece of evidence that shows Sam was indeed a man of faith. He was not simply a weak person who was swayed by Nephi's logic and eloquence. Rather, he had

intelligence, and he sought with diligence to understand the things of God. To stand for the Lord and endure persecution and hardship is a sign of faith and reliance on the strength of God. He established a firm foundation upon which his lineage could build faith and a good testimony. Amazingly, there is no record of anyone in Sam's family that rebelled against God or the government of the land.

Why would Sam be willing to endure the anger and persecution of Laman and Lemuel to support Lehi and Nephi? One reason could be Sam's faith in the ability of God to protect them. Sam seemed to be a man who could trust God even when the evidence that could be seen said to doubt. Sam believed when the older boys were beating him; he believed when the Lamanites threatened the Nephites; he believed when God said his future would be with his brother, Nephi. Sam was faithful, hopeful, courageous and enduring.

The humility of Sam is illustrated in his acceptance of the blessing given to him by his father. Sam's inheritance in the Promised Land was to be with Nephi and his descendants.

Thy seed shall be numbered with his seed; And thou shalt be even like unto thy brother, and thy seed like unto his seed; (2 Nephi 3:20-21 RLDS) [2 Nephi 4:11 LDS]

Being an older brother, he could have been wounded and angry to have to be identified with his younger brother. But Sam simply seems to have said in his heart; "Be it according to thy will, O Lord." This is why there is no tribe identified with the name of Sam. He believed the word of God and cast his lot with his brother Nephi. The descendants of Nephi are mixed with the descendants of Sam. Thus, when the Lamanites became too great a danger and Nephi had to lead his family into the wilderness again, Sam went with him. (2 Nephi 4:7-9 RLDS) [2 Nephi 5:4-5 LDS] Again, he demonstrated a humble submission to God and to those whom God set over him.

After the Nephites separated from the Lamanites, the record doesn't mention Sam or his family again. When he died, the names of his children, as well as any other details about him are missing from the record. However, the Holy Spirit leaves us with a beautiful postscript on the life of Sam. Alma records these words concerning Sam and his brethren, "Nephi, Jacob, and Joseph, and Sam, who were just and holy men." (Alma 1:104 RLDS) [Alma 3:6 LDS] The testimony of God is that Sam was a man who pleased the Lord.

This description of Sam indicates his faith was not simply in support of his brother, but that he was also a diligent minister of the Lord. Nephi and Jacob are known for being powerful preachers of the word. It is not hard to believe that Sam would often speak and teach from the scriptures and minister to the Nephite people as well. The title of just and holy men is not given indiscriminately in the scriptures. These are ministers who were approved of the Lord and were valiant in their testimony of Jesus Christ.

CONCLUSION

Many of the scriptural characters we study seem out of reach with the kind of obscure lives many of us feel we live. Frequently, people lament that they can never be a Nephi or a Paul. However, in the life of Sam we discover the very same

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traits of loyalty, faith, compassion and diligence for which more famous men and women are known. The contrast is that Sam's life was one of relative obscurity compared to his brothers, yet he is spoken of as a faithful servant of the Lord God.

What lessons can we learn from a life like this? First, we see it is important for parents to teach their children the doctrine and practical aspects of the Christian faith. Sam's parents certainly did this.

We ought to also recognize that every servant of the Lord is important to the Lord's work. Every member of the body is given a different gift or part to play. Some are prominent and easily seen or heard. Others are deep, silent and unseen. However, every part, every gift is vital to the lively functioning of the Body of Christ. Very often people seem to strive for honor and notoriety; failing to achieve this, they do little or nothing. Others feel that they have nothing to contribute to the work and also do little or nothing. Occasionally these inactive members become the source of obstacles to the work instead of help.

Sam's life brings a solid testimony that what God wants are faithful followers who are willing to believe and serve at all times and in all places. Sam showed no interest in place and position. He was not concerned about his rights or privileges. Sam's only concern lay in doing what was right.

Sam teaches us about faith, diligence, loyalty, discernment, courage and charity. He was a good brother, patient and kind. He was humble and long-suffering. Unfortunately, the writings of Nephi are in first person, as a personal journal would be, and thus the details of other people in the family are mentioned only briefly. Perhaps in the records to be revealed more will be known about Sam. Sam's life has been summed up in this way,

"We see in the lives of Nephi and his brother Sam a dramatic demonstration of the sweet fruits of seeking the Lord for a personal witness and for divine direction."²

In the end, the Holy Spirit provided the final testimony which shall stand for him throughout eternity — he was a "just and holy man." May God raise up many such men and women!

STUDY GUIDE

1. Describe the kind of home that Sam was raised in. Why do you suppose Sam and Nephi turned out so different from Laman and Lemuel?
2. Many times a student will excel to surpass his teacher. Discuss the ways in which Sam's influence as an older brother of faith might have helped to develop the character of Nephi? If Sam was such an influence in the life of Nephi, what can we learn from Sam about how to handle the success of others?
3. How does Sam's life reveal the importance of a godly father and mother?
4. What does Sam have to teach us about the qualities of a good follower?
5. What is known about Sam's faith in God?
6. What are the tribal names of the families that formed the Nephite and Lamanite people?
7. What was Sam's heritage in the new land?
8. Prior to his death Lehi blessed everyone in his traveling party, including Zoram and the sons of Ishmael. What was Sam's blessing?
9. How does Sam's life demonstrate what pleases God in a person's life?
10. Do you think you would like Sam as a friend? Why?
11. How would a person with Sam's qualities benefit or harm a branch of the church?
12. Write down five adjectives that best describe Sam's personality. (For example, humble, proud, mean, funny, etc.)
13. Why do we read so little about Sam?
14. Would you like to be remembered like Sam is remembered in The Book of Mormon?

¹Margaret Bingman, Encyclopedia of the Book of Mormon, (Independence, MO: Herald House, 1978), p 307.

²Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet, Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1987), Vol 1, p. 17.

NEW PROGRAM

Once again BMF supporters have responded to our request for help with a new program, English as a Second Language (ESL). The program will be co-directed with the areas of responsibility divided into academic and administrative. We currently have certified teachers and assistants reviewing potential curriculum and developing lesson plans. We still encourage others to volunteer since the number of required positions is uncertain.



The tentative start date is September 7, 2006. We are talking to community

leaders to find the most effective ways to contact non-English speaking people in the areas surrounding Independence. The financial requirement to develop and maintain the program is approximately \$2,500. Donations totaling \$525 have been received. We still need your financial support.

If you have questions, comments or are interested in becoming a part of this program, please contact us.

Abish, a Lamanite Believer

by Gary Whiting

From the day Lehi was called out of the land of Jerusalem, the Nephites had been seeking a way to communicate the truth of the gospel to their brethren, the Lamanites. Nephi's efforts were flatly rejected by Laman and Lemuel, his older brothers. Their hardness to the gospel was transmitted to their offspring for generations. Jacob also labored for his brethren's welfare in Christ, but to no avail. Enos did likewise. However, few of the Lamanites came to the knowledge of God and saving faith for many years.

THE SONS OF MOSIAH

After Alma, and the church he founded, joined the people of King Mosiah in Zarahemla the church grew very strong. Even the rebellion of Alma the Younger and the four sons of Mosiah could not stop the work of the church. Through faith, the church in Zarahemla trusted God and overcame evil, as Paul suggested. (Romans 12:21) The evil work of these youth was halted by the prayer of faith and the intercession of the angel of God.

The marvelous response of God in answer to the church's prayer provided for the recovery of Alma's son and the sons of King Mosiah. This rescue set the stage for an even larger, miraculous recovery of thousands of souls from the darkness of hatred and bitterness among the Lamanite thrones.

Following their conversion, the sons of Mosiah traveled among the people repairing damage they had previously caused. During this time they were taught and disciplined by the Lord. Over time, their hearts were softened for believers and unbelievers. Eventually, they began to feel a call and desire to preach among the Lamanites. When convinced that they should pursue their ministry among the Lamanites, the four young missionaries asked their father, the king, for his permission.

And it came to pass that they did plead with their father many days, that they might go up to the land of Nephi. (Mosiah 12:9 RLDS) [Mosiah 28:5 LDS]

The scripture says Mosiah took their request to the Lord. (Mosiah 12:10 RLDS) [Mosiah 28:6 LDS] The king was very reluctant to give his permission for such a tour. He knew how dangerous the Lamanites were and he understood all too well the hatred of the Lamanites toward all Nephites. The likelihood of one or all of his sons being killed was very high. Finally, the

Lord assured Mosiah his sons would be preserved and kept alive during the mission. Therefore, Mosiah gave his permission and the expedition to the Lamanites began.

THE LAMANITE MISSION

The sons of Mosiah entered the land of Nephi, the home of the Lamanites, with a few selected companions. After they worshiped together, they separated to do the Lord's bidding among the Lamanites. Each group headed in different directions, as it is written, "trusting in the Lord, that they should meet again at the close of their harvest." (Alma 12:21 RLDS) [Alma 17:13 LDS]

Ammon's testimony receives the most attention in the book of Alma. He was discovered by Lamanites who were descendants of the sons of Ishmael. According to their custom, the army delivered Ammon before the king. Lamoni offered Ammon the chance to marry his daughter, but Ammon chose to be a servant to the king. He remembered the counsel of the Lord to be patient and long suffering in order to provide a good example for the Lamanites of the land. (Alma 12:19 RLDS) [Alma 17:11 LDS]

In his capacity as a servant, Ammon wondrously defended the flocks of the king from marauders. It was this miraculous event that opened the door for Ammon to bear witness of the gospel to King Lamoni. Ammon preached the gospel to the king, who received it with gladness and an open heart. As the words of the gospel penetrated his once hardened heart, Lamoni was overcome by the power of the Spirit and he fell to the ground.

King Lamoni and his people were descended of the sons of Ishmael. From the first, the sons of Ishmael sided with Laman and Lemuel. They had always been Lamanites. As was typical of the Lamanites, the Ishmaelites had no faith in the things of God and were very suspicious. The king had fallen under the power of the Spirit and the darkness of tradition and unbelief was being stripped away from his mind.

Ammon knew Lamoni was under the influence of the Holy Spirit, but to everyone else he seemed to be dead. (Alma 12:123 RLDS) [Alma 18:42 LDS] He was placed in a room for two days and mourned as one who had died. Rumors about his actual state were mixed. Lamoni's wife was uncertain and asked Ammon for advice. She manifested a wonderful and unexpected degree of faith. When Ammon said the king was not dead and would rise the next day, she believed his word without doubt. This faith even amazed Ammon.

When Lamoni did revive as Ammon had predicted, he began to speak with convincing power about the power of Jesus Christ. The king spoke of his repentance. His joy was so immense that he was soon overcome by the Spirit again. This time his wife also fell under the Spirit's cleansing power. Even Ammon, being overjoyed at the majestic touch of God's saving grace, fell down in his joy in the Spirit. The many servants of the royal household also began seeking the Lord in prayer and worshiping Him. One by one, they were overcome with the Lord's Spirit during their worship. One of the worshipers was a woman named Abish. She enters the story with a powerful and necessary part to play.

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ABISH

This woman was a servant in Lamoni's house. How long she had been there is unknown, but God placed her in a strategic position beside the queen. When Abish saw the power of God in the king's house, she rejoiced. Finally, she saw the chance she had long waited for. Many years earlier, Abish had been converted to the Lord through the testimony of her father.

Her father had been ministered to by the Lord through "a remarkable vision." (Alma 12:150 RLDS) [Alma 19:16 LDS] In this vision, her father had been converted to the gospel of Jesus Christ. This was not common for a Lamanite. The news of the vision was not commonly known. However, her father had spoken of the vision to Abish, and she also had believed the gospel.

Throughout all these years Abish was a silent believer. For whatever reason, she felt constrained to hold her peace about her faith. Through all the days, months and years of her service in the palace, Abish had been seeking a way to witness of her faith. This was very difficult in the Lamanite world. The gospel was not tolerated in most Lamanite populations and word of her faith could have risked her life.

Now as the king, the queen, and the other servants had been struck with the power of God, Abish felt this was just the thing needed to convince her fellow Lamanites of the power of God and the righteousness of the gospel. Accordingly, Abish ran from the palace telling all who would hear of a remarkable event taking place in the king's house.

And supposing that this opportunity, by making known unto the people what had happened among them, that by beholding this scene, it would cause them to believe in the power of God, Therefore she ran forth from house to house, making it known unto the people; and they began to assemble themselves together unto the house of the king. (Alma 12:152-153 RLDS) [Alma 19:17 LDS]

Many people flocked into the palace where the king, queen, their servants and Ammon lay upon the floor. The crowd grew larger as more and more people came to see what Abish was declaring.

In the minds of the gathering crowd there was confusion over what they were seeing. A great debate arose as people tried to decipher the meaning and cause of what they saw.

And there came a multitude, and to their astonishment, they beheld the king, and the queen, and their servants, prostrate upon the earth, and they all lay there as though they were dead; And they also saw Ammon, and behold he was a Nephite. And now the people began to murmur among themselves; some saying, that it was a great evil that had come upon them, or upon the king and his house, because he had suffered that the Nephite should remain in the land. But others rebuked them, saying, The king hath brought this evil upon his house, because he slew his servants who had had their flocks scattered at the waters of Sebus: (Alma 12:154-157 RLDS) [Alma 19:18-20 LDS]

There was no consensus of understanding regarding the scene before their eyes. Among the crowd were men who had scattered the king's flocks. They knew it was Ammon who had killed and injured so many of their number. Seeing Ammon unarmed and lying on the floor appeared to be the perfect opportunity to kill him and seek a measure of revenge. This was an ill-fated plan that turned fatal for the man who raised his sword to kill Ammon. God's wrath was immediately poured out on that man and he died before he could harm Ammon.

After enthusiastically and diligently running about inviting all she could find to witness the glorious events taking place at the palace, Abish returned. She had anticipated that the wonderful events would have caused a revival to break out, but what she saw only broke her own heart — there was confusion and arguing. Although no one really knew the meaning of what they saw, it seemed that they all had an opinion about it. Obviously, Abish was devastated.

And they began to marvel again among themselves what could be the cause of this

great power, or what all these things could mean. And it came to pass that there were many among them, who said that Ammon was the Great Spirit, and others said he was sent by the Great Spirit; But others rebuked them all, saying, that he was a monster, who had been sent from the Nephites to torment us; And there were some who said that Ammon was sent by the Great Spirit to afflict them, because of their iniquities; and that it was the Great Spirit that had always attended the Nephites; who had ever delivered them out of their hands; And they said that it was this Great Spirit who had destroyed so many of their brethren, the Lamanites; and thus the contention began to be exceeding sharp among them. And while they were thus contending, the woman servant who had caused the multitude to be gathered together, came; and when she saw the contention which was among the multitude, she



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was exceeding sorrowful, even unto tears. (Alma 12:163-168 RLDS) [Alma 19:24-28 LDS]

For all these years, Abish had waited for a moment to share her faith with her fellow countrymen. This moment of victory had deteriorated into confusion and disappointment. Had she misread the events? Had she blown her big chance with God? All about her was chaos and confusion. And what is more, her secret was not a secret now. Everyone knew that she was a Christian.

Pushing through the crowd and its wild speculations, Abish moved to the place where the queen lay motionless. "If they won't believe me, maybe they will believe the queen," she may have thought. Stretching out her hand, Abish took the queen's hand in hers to pull the queen to her feet.

And it came to pass that she went and took the queen by the hand, that perhaps she might raise her from the ground: and as soon as she touched her hand, she arose and stood upon her feet, (Alma 12:169 RLDS) [Alma 19:29 LDS]

The queen arose and immediately exclaimed the glory of Jesus' redemption and then she touched the king. He also arose and immediately began to rebuke the contention in the crowd, teaching them about Jesus. (Alma 12:173 RLDS) [Alma 19:31 LDS] The witness of the king and queen astonished the spectators, softened their hearts to the gospel and giving birth to a great revival among the Lamanites.

CONCLUSION

Who was Abish? Why was she in the palace that day? Why had the vision come to her father so many years earlier? Why was she in the position she found herself? Why Abish?

Abish could well have been planted and prepared beforehand in the good wisdom of God to have been like Esther of old. Esther was divinely placed in the proximity of the king to save her people from Haman's plot. She was told by her uncle Mordecai that perhaps she was in that place "for such a time as this" (Esther 4:14).

In other words, Abish had been led to the gospel in an unusual fashion and given a position in the king's household so God could use her testimony and faith in the conversion of other people. Abish may have dreamed and prayed about converting the queen. She may never have dreamed that she would have played a role in the conversion of so many of her fellow citizens. Certainly Abish's dreams would not have included the great controversy and trouble she found after she had alerted the citizenry. Nevertheless, she was in the right place when God needed her and she did the right thing when God gave her the opportunity.

She showed amazing endurance over the years following her father's remarkable conversion. Hanging on to her faith and hope in Christ despite seemingly unbeatable odds she was a model of patience and trust. Despite many hardships and disappointments, she maintained and overcame the long wait through her faith in Christ alone. This is a testimony to us of the patient faith which the saints of God must cultivate. It is an abiding trust in the wisdom of our God. Even when the plan

was falling apart, or so it seemed, Abish persevered and was a victor in the strength of the Lord.

She acted when it was time to act. So many of us fail to seize the moment of our opportunity and the time passes away along with the Lord's blessing. Not Abish, she moved out in faith when the Lord called on her. Though it seemed uphill and at times discouraging, she finished the work God gave her to do.

Imagine the smile that was on her face and the peace in her heart as Abish laid down to sleep on that night after the palace was reborn in Jesus' name. As the Brother of Jared of old, she could go to God in prayer that night and say she had done the thing He had asked of her. Such bliss and immeasurable peace must have filled her soul. Just a few days earlier she was seemingly alone in the testimony of Jesus, waiting and hoping for the gospel to come to her people. Then Ammon came, and the power of God was present. Now she had many new brothers and sister in Christ. Beyond this, Abish was blessed with the knowledge that she was able to see her long-awaited dream of assisting the Lord Jesus in rescuing her people.

The difficulties, anticipation and faithfulness of standing for Christ are well illustrated by the life of Abish. For those wishing to be good witnesses for Jesus Christ, Abish's testimony does give some useful insight. She knew and trusted in Christ. Her life was submissive to God's will. He needed her in the palace, and she was willing to be placed there for the service of Jesus according to His timing. No accusations of hypocrisy or other character deficiency was noted in the scripture. Thus, it appears that Abish lived a quiet but powerful life of a Christian, not compromising her ideals and beliefs though she was in the midst of a pagan bloodthirsty people.

Abish is a small figure in The Book of Mormon story. However, she played a huge role in the cause of the kingdom. Her name is now recorded for the entire world to see as a woman who served the Lord and glorified Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world. May God bless all of the "Abishes" of the world.

STUDY GUIDE

1. Who was Abish?
2. How did she become a follower of Jesus Christ?
3. Why does the Lord direct the names of people like Abish to be included and others to be left out of the sacred scripture?
4. Why was Abish's contribution worthy of our notice?
5. Ammon knew the king was overcome by the power of the Lord to cleanse the wickedness from his heart. The queen and the servants also were overcome by this power. Though praying and worshipping with the other servants, Abish was not overcome. Does this hint anything about her walk with Jesus? Why?
6. What helped make Abish a good witness for Jesus?
7. Describe the feelings and hopes that may have been in her heart as Abish returned to the palace and saw the confusion of the people.

I WITNESS Kids




Pass the Popcorn


Paul Frinthal

When I was just 10 years old, my family attended church in the small town of Galesburg, Illinois. It was a small congregation but they always had plenty of things for us kids to do.

We had junior church every Sunday morning. Some very dedicated ladies and priesthood always had some type of lesson followed by refreshments. I must admit that the frosted sugar cookies were always in the back of my mind, knowing they would follow the lesson that day. It was in this environment that I first met The Book of Mormon. Being a big western movie fan, I was interested to hear that this book was written by Indians; that the language was strange and that it took a young boy named Joseph Smith a long time, with the help of others, to transcribe this book into English. I was also amazed to learn that these Indians were not familiar tribes like Apache or Sioux; they came from the land of Jesus long before He was born. How in the world did they get here?

The stories were wonderful, and I remember looking forward to hearing more about the adventures of Nephi and his brothers. Weekends that summer were good for me. On Saturday mornings we would go to the movie theater, where I paid 25 cents for a box of popcorn and the new Hopalong Cassidy movie followed by 25 cartoons. On Sunday morning, it was another challenge for Nephi in my junior church lesson.



 The stories were simple to understand and, from them, we learned there was a right way to live and do everything.

 Somewhere in my teenage "know-it-all" years or my young adult life, I lost that Book of Mormon excitement. This wonderful book sat on a hidden shelf somewhere gathering dust. Those years are lost, and I can't get them back.

Today I am happy to report that the excitement is back. I love to read the wonderful stories that were actually lived by members of the House of Israel who found themselves living in Central America. These are lessons for life and blessings we cannot imagine without The Book of Mormon. What Saturday morning cowboy movie could ever match the excitement found in the pages of The Book of Mormon!

As I wrote this article, I thought about myself as a 10-year-old. How simple was my faith and how exciting was that time! Was it like this for others?

I remember our teacher saying, "Today, children, we will learn about the Nephite captain, Moroni." I think maybe it should be this simple again. Maybe it should be this exciting. Let's get a good seat . . . pass the popcorn . . .





MORONI SON OF MORMON

By David Howlett

Moroni was the last writer in The Book of Mormon. He was the son of Mormon who was a captain of the Nephite armies. _____(A) lived hundreds of years after the birth of Christ. He was born into a nation filled with _____.(B) There were many different churches in his time, but there were very few people who were true followers of _____(C) The _____(D) had grown hardened and they would not repent. Because of this, the Lord would not help them and they were _____(E) into the hands of the Lamanites. All during Moroni's childhood, there were wars separated by short periods of _____.(F) One day Moroni went to hear his father preach to the people. That day his father gave a very powerful _____.(G) Mormon talked about having faith in God, having hope, being humble and, most importantly, about having charity. Moroni learned that _____(H) was the pure love of Jesus Christ. It was a love different from all other loves. Charity was patient. It was kind. It was humble and giving. It endured _____.(I) When everything else failed, charity was still there. This sermon made a strong impression on Moroni, because he later included it in _____(J)

Moroni grew in his _____(K) in the Lord and was eventually called into the ministry. Moroni took a righteous stand even though being a _____(L) was not _____.(M) Moroni served under his father as a captain in the Nephite _____(N) during a time of great contention between the Nephites and the _____.(O) After a series of smaller battles, the Nephite and Lamanite armies met in a final battle at hill _____.(P) When the battle was over, only Mormon, Moroni and 22 other men were left _____(Q) out of the Nephite army!

Before Mormon died, he gave the golden plates to his son, Moroni. Both Mormon and Moroni hoped that one day these _____(R) would be taken to the Lamanites to _____(S) them of Jesus Christ. Many years and many miles later, Moroni completed his writing and then _____(T) the plates on a hillside in what came to be known as the state of New York. Several hundred years later, Moroni appeared as an _____(U) to a young man named Joseph Smith. He told Joseph about the _____.(V) Finally, he let Joseph have the plates. Today, we have The Book of Mormon as a result of this translation.

continued on next page

The words below will complete the story of Moroni.

- | | | | | |
|-----------|--------------|---------|---------|----------------|
| CHRISTIAN | JESUS CHRIST | ALONE | CHARITY | BURIED |
| POPULAR | FRIEND | PEACE | TEACH | BOOK OF MORMON |
| MORONI | NEPHITES | ALIVE | LOST | HOPE |
| ARMY | LAMANITES | SERMON | FOREVER | ANGEL |
| TESTIMONY | CUMORAH | RECORDS | FAITH | PLATES |
| SIN | DELIVERED | | | |

Reprinted from I Witness Kids Summer 1996

Looking back over Moroni's life, we can see that many awful things happened to him. He _____(w) all of his family and friends. He was hunted by the Lamanites. Yet, Moroni was never really _____.(x) God was always with him. The three Nephites and even Jesus Christ visited Moroni and talked with him face to face. Jesus Christ was a personal _____(y) to Moroni. This relationship gave him the strength to go on when all _____(z) seemed to be lost. In The Book of Mormon, Moroni wrote the following words to us:

And now I would commend you to seek this Jesus of whom the prophets and apostles have written, that the grace of God the Father, and also the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost, which beareth record of them, may be, and abide in you for ever. Amen. (Ether 5:41 RLDS) [Ether 12:41 LDS]

The testimony which Moroni bears to us is to seek out Jesus Christ as your personal friend. No greater _____(AA) can be given to us.

Answers to Moroni fill-in-the-blank puzzle:
 (A) Moroni (B) sin (C) Jesus Christ (D) Nephites (E) delivered (F) peace (G) sermon (H) charity (I) forever (J) The Book of Mormon (K) faith (L) Christian (M) popular (N) army (O) Lamanites (P) Cumorah (Q) alive (R) records (S) teach (T) buried (U) angel (V) plates (W) lost (X) alone (Y) friend (Z) hope (AA) testimony

M E S S A G E

Use the code key at the bottom to decode the message. Answer on back cover.

**A
W
A
O
U**

8-3 8-5 9-3 8-5 8-4 7-4 7-2 9-3 6-5 10-3 7-4 8-4
 7-1 6-1 7-4 9-5 7-3 6-1 8-4 6-4 9-5 8-5 8-5 8-1 6-1
 9-3 7-4 7-2 7-3 9-5 6-5 8-5 10-1 9-4 9-4 9-5 6-1 8-4 6-4
 7-3 8-5 10-3 6-1 6-2 8-5 10-1 9-5 10-4 8-5 10-1 ?

	1	2	3	4	5
6	A	B	C	D	E
7	F	G	H	I	J
8	K	L	M	N	O
9	P	Q	R	S	T
10	U	V	W	Y	Z

*Answers on back cover

Moroni, Son of Mormon

P L A T E S E T I H P E N P C F E M
 G B D A M E I D T Y L L O S T S B O
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 N C R I N M P S S H T F L D S T E O
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 K E R A P R I G A F M P S O F P J A
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 T C R I M H O L E P M S D H J B U Y
 I E S V M N E F R I E N D C E O X L
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CHRISTIAN
 POPULAR
 MORONI
 ARMY
 TESTIMONY
 SIN

JESUS CHRIST
 FRIEND
 NEPHITES
 LAMANITES
 CUMORAH
 DELIVERED

ALONE
 PEACE
 ALIVE
 SERMON
 RECORDS
 CHARITY

TEACH
 LOST
 FOREVER
 FAITH
 BURIED

BOOK OF MORMON
 HOPE
 ANGEL
 PLATES

*Answers on back cover

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Endowment Fund

long term needs of the foundation. These gifts will be placed in an investment account allowing us to draw upon the earnings for future needs. If you would like to make a contribution to this fund, which is over and above your current level of giving, please call the foundation office with your name and telephone number and our treasurer will contact you. Future issues of The Witness will address in greater detail The Book of Mormon Foundation Endowment Fund.

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PUZZLE ANSWERS

Moroni, Son of Mormon

P	L	A	T	E	S	E	T	I	H	P	E	N	P	C	F	E	M
G	B	D	A	M	E	I	D	T	Y	L	L	O	S	T	S	B	O
O	M	E	G	E	R	U	P	E	C	Y	O	B	D	I	L	P	R
N	C	R	I	N	M	P	S	S	H	T	F	L	D	S	T	E	O
A	L	E	N	P	O	A	J	T	S	I	Y	G	E	J	V	R	N
I	E	V	B	P	N	M	V	I	S	R	Y	B	I	E	D	E	I
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I	A	E	L	G	C	E	S	N	M	C	F	K	B	J	D	R	T
R	S	D	R	S	U	A	F	Y	G	F	O	E	M	C	I	D	H
H	W	R	U	A	M	P	S	L	R	M	O	S	U	N	I	S	T
C	P	S	J	E	O	X	T	E	A	C	H	K	A	O	L	E	I
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J	A	S	L	R	A	Y	L	Y	M	R	A	S	L	O	Q	T	F
T	C	R	I	M	H	O	L	E	P	M	S	D	H	J	B	U	Y
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CODED MESSAGE

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