



Type: Book Chapter

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## Chapter XIX

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Source: *The Story of the Book of Mormon*

Published: Salt Lake City; Joseph Hyrum Parry, 1888

Pages: 123-131

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**Abstract:** The Mission of the Sons of Mosiah to the Lamanites—Their Journey in the Wilderness—Ammon Brought before King Lamoni—The Conflict at the Waters of Sebus—The Miraculous Conversion of Lamoni and his Family—Abish the Waiting Woman

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siding High Priest of the church, and the people chose him for their first chief judge. The church, the records, the nation, all being thus provided for, Mosiah passed away to the joys of eternity. He was sixty-three years old, and he had ruled his people in righteousness thirty-three years. When he passed away no fierce convulsions wrecked the ship of state, the political atmosphere was calm, the people joyfully assumed their new responsibilities, and the first of the judges succeeded the last of the kings without causing one disturbing wave on the placid waters of the national life.

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## CHAPTER XIX.

THE MISSION OF THE SONS OF MOSIAH TO THE LAMANITES—THEIR JOURNEY IN THE WILDERNESS—AMMON BROUGHT BEFORE KING LAMONI—THE CONFLICT AT THE WATERS OF SEBUS—THE MIRACULOUS CONVERSION OF LAMONI AND HIS FAMILY—ABISH THE WAITING WOMAN.

BEFORE we take up the history of the Nephites, during the reigns of their judges, we will follow the sons of Mosiah and their brethren to the land of Nephi, on the perilous mission that they had undertaken, to convert the Lamanites. The names of the four sons of Mosiah were Aaron, Ammon, Omner and Himmi; amongst their companions were Muloki and Ammah.

These all took their journey into the southern wilderness during the last year of Mosiah's reign,



THE WILDERNESS.

or B. C. 91. They carried with them their bows and arrows and other weapons, not to wage war but to kill game for their food in the wilderness. Their journey was a tedious one; they lost their way and almost lost heart, and indeed were on the point of returning when they received divine assurance of their ultimate success. Nerved by this assurance, and with much fasting and prayer, they continued their wanderings, and before long reached the borders of the Lamanites. Commending themselves to God they here separated, each one trusting to the Lord to guide them to the places where he could best accomplish the purposes of heaven.

Ammon entered the Lamanite territory at a land called Ishmael. Here Lamoni was the chief ruler, under his father, who was king of all the Lamanites. Ammon was no sooner discovered than he was taken, bound with cords and conducted into the presence of Lamoni. It was the custom of the Lamanites to so use every Nephite they captured, and it rested with the whim of the king whether the captive be slain, imprisoned or sent out of the country. The king's will and pleasure were the only law on such matters.

Through God's grace, Ammon found favor in the eyes of Lamoni, and, learning that it was his desire to reside amongst the Lamanites, the king offered him one of his daughters to wife. Ammon courteously declined this intended honor and begged to be accepted as one of the king's servants, which arrangement pleased Lamoni, and Ammon was placed in that part of the royal household that had charge of the monarch's flocks and herds.

A glance at Lamanite society may not here be out

of place. It would appear that in Lamoni's days the will of the sovereign was the law of the land. 'The king's power over the lives and property of his subjects was unlimited. We read of no constitutions that prescribed or limited his authority. 'The more degraded portions of the race wandered in the vast wilderness, dwelling in tents, and subsisting on what they stole or killed in the chase. 'The more civilized Lamanites resided in cities, were wealthy in cattle, and followed the occupations general among semi-civilized races.

Lamoni was rich in flocks and herds, probably the results of the taxation of the people, but even the king's property was not secure from theft. Marauding bands would watch for his numerous cattle as they approached their watering places. Then with yell and prolonged shout they would stampede the herds and drive away all they could beyond the reach of the king's servants. These would gather up what few animals, if any, they found, and return to the king in the full expectancy of being made to pay for the loss by the forfeit of their lives. 'They were seldom disappointed, for Lamoni or some of his predecessors had established a somewhat unique criminal code with regard to stealing the royal cattle. 'They had adopted the idea that it was easier and cheaper to make the herdsmen responsible for the losses and punish them therefor, than to hunt out and capture the thieves. It had at least one virtue, it prevented collusion between the robbers and the servants; but it produced much dissatisfaction among Lamoni's subjects.

On the third day of Ammon's service, one of these raids was made on the king's cattle as they were being taken to the waters of Sebus, the common water-

ing place. The cattle fled in all directions, and the dispirited servants, with the fear of death before their eyes, sat down and wept instead of attempting to stop them. Ammon perceived that this was his opportunity. He first reasoned with the servants, then encouraged them, and having sufficiently aroused their feelings, he led them in the attempt to head off the flying herds. With much exertion they succeeded. The cattle were all gathered, but the robbers still waited at the watering place to renew the attack when they drew near enough. Ammon perceiving this, placed the servants at various points on the outside of the flocks and himself went forward to contend with the robbers. Though they were many, he knew that he was more powerful than them all, for God was with him. The idea of one man withstanding so many was supremely ridiculous to the robbers. But as one after another fell before his unerring aim, they were astonished, and dreaded him as something more than human. Enraged at the loss of six of their number they rushed upon him in a body, determined to crush him with their clubs. Ammon, undaunted, drew his sword and awaited the onslaught. Their leader fell dead at his feet, and as one after another raised their clubs, Ammon struck off their arms until none dared to approach him, but instead retreated afar off.

It was a strange procession that returned to the palace. The fears of the herdsmen had been turned to joy, and they marched in triumph into the presence of the king, with the arms of the robbers as testimonies of the truth of the story of Ammon's prowess. Doubtless they did not diminish the telling points in the narrative; the numbers of the band, the courage and

strength of the Nephite, were each dilated upon with the vividness of superstitious imagination. When the king had heard their marvelous story his heart was troubled, and he came to the conclusion that Ammon must be the Great Spirit, of whose existence he had an undefined idea. He trembled at the thought that perhaps this Spirit had come to punish him because of the number of his servants whom he had slain for permitting his cattle to be stolen.

Notwithstanding his misgivings, Lamoni desired to see Ammon, who, acting as though nothing particular had happened, was preparing the king's horses and chariots, as the servants had been directed. When he entered the royal presence, the king was too much filled with emotion to speak to him. More than once Ammon drew to the king's attention that he stood before him, as he had been requested, and wished to know what were his commands. But he elicited no response. At last, perceiving the monarch's thoughts, he began to question Lamoni regarding sacred things, and afterwards to expound to him the principles of life and salvation. Lamoni listened and believed. He was conscience-stricken, and with all the strength of his new-born faith, he humbly begged that the Lord would shew that same mercy to him and to his people that he had shewn to the Nephites. Overcome with the intensity of his feelings he sank to the earth as in a trance. In this state he was carried to his wife, who with her children anxiously watched over him for two days and two nights, awaiting his return to consciousness. There was great diversity of opinion among his retainers as to what troubled the king. Some said the power of the Great Spirit was

upon him, others that an evil power possessed him, yet others asserted that he was dead, and with remarkable acuteness of smell affirmed, He stinketh. At the end of this time they had resolved to lay him away in the sepulchre, when the queen sent for Ammon and plead with him in her husband's behalf. Ammon gave her the joyful assurance, He is not dead, but sleepeth in God, and to-morrow he shall rise again. Then he added, Believest thou this? She answered, I have no witness, save thy word and the word of our servants, nevertheless I believe it shall be according as thou hast said. Then Ammon blessed her, and told her there had not been such great faith among all the people of the Nephites.

So the queen lovingly continued her watch by the bed of her husband until the appointed hour. Lamoni then arose, as Ammon had foretold. His soul was filled with heavenly joy. His first words were of praise to God, his next were blessings on his faithful wife whose faith he felt or knew. He testified to the coming of the Redeemer, of whose greatness, glory, power and mercy he had learned while in the spirit. His body was too weak for the realities of eternity that filled his heart. Again he sank overpowered to the earth, and the same spirit overcame his wife also. Ammon's rejoicing heart swelled within him as he heard and witnessed these things. He fell on his knees and poured out his soul in praise and thanksgiving until he also could not contain the brightness of the glory, the completeness of the joy that overwhelmed him. Unconscious of all earthly things he sank beside the royal pair. The same spirit of unmeasured joy then fell upon all present and with the same results. There was but

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one exception. a Lamanitish waiting woman named Abish, who many years before had been converted to the Lord, but kept the secret in her own bosom. She comprehended the why and wherefore of this strange scene. She saw the workings of the Almighty through which the untutored minds of the Lamanites could be brought to an understanding of the plan of salvation. From house to house she went, calling the people to witness what had occurred in the palace. They gathered at her call, but as might naturally be expected their impressions were very conflicting. Some said one thing, some another; some argued for good, some for evil; to some, Ammon was a god, to others, a demon. One man, who had had a brother slain at the waters of Sebus, drew his sword and attempted to slay Ammon, but was struck dead by an unseen power before he could carry his rash intent into action. So fierce was the contention, so angry grew the controversy, that Abish, fearing greater trouble, by an inspiration took hold of the hand of the queen, who thereupon rose to her feet. The queen's first thought was of her husband. She took his hand and raised him up, and ere long all who had been reposing in the spirit stood upon their feet. The king, the queen, the servants, all rejoiced with joy unspeakable. They all bore testimony to God's abundant love and goodness, and some declared that holy angels had visited them. Still the contention was not entirely appeased until Lamoni stood forth and explained to them the divine mysteries of which they were so ignorant. Many believed, others did not, but Ammon had the indescribable happiness of shortly after establishing a church to the Lord in the midst of the people of the land of Ishmael. Ammon's humility,

faith and patience were bringing forth their fruit; while his soul gathered faith and strength in the fulfilment of the promises of the great Jehovah in answer to the pleadings of his faithful, loving father.

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## CHAPTER XX.

AMMON AND LAMONI START FOR THE LAND OF MIDDONI—  
THEY MEET THE OLD KING—HIS RAGE AT SEEING  
AMMON—HE ENDEAVORS TO KILL HIS SON—AARON AND  
HIS BRETHREN LIBERATED—A SKETCH OF THEIR  
LABORS AND SUFFERINGS—THE CONVERSION OF  
LAMONI'S FATHER AND HIS HOUSEHOLD.

WHEN the church was satisfactorily established in the land of Ishmael, Lamoni arranged to pay a visit to his father, the great king in the land of Nephi, to whom he was desirous of introducing Ammon. However, the voice of the Lord warned his servant not to go, but instead thereof to proceed to the land of Middoni, where his brother Aaron and other missionaries were suffering in prison. When Lamoni heard of Ammon's intention, and the cause thereof, he decided to accompany him. He felt that he could be of service in delivering the prisoners, as Antionmo, the king of Middoni, was one of his special friends, and likely to grant any favor he might ask. They accordingly started on their errand of mercy, but on their way were surprised to meet Lamoni's father, who grew exceedingly angry when he found Ammon in the company of