

Lesson 2: Jarom, Omni, Words of Mormon

BACKGROUND NOTES: The two small books of Jarom and Omni cover almost three hundred years! Three hundred years ago for us was the 1700's! Tremendous changes in the societies of the Book of Mormon are represented but with almost no details about what those changes were. The writers in these two chapters stuck to their original charge, which was to record things of particular spiritual importance. Because the records passed from father to son or brother, the author may or may not have been particularly inclined that way and so, frankly, there are "dry spells" in the record. No matter. What we have is enough to know that God was working throughout the years with his people through prophets to draw them to Himself.

First Reading: Jarom verses 1-15

1. This is a short book. How many authors does it have?
2. Jarom begins by telling what he is not going to write about.
 - A. What is that?

 - B. Why not? (Note verse 2 and also verse 14.)
3. Contrast the negative things he says about the society in which he lived in verse 3 with the positive things he says about that same society in verses 4 & 5.

NEGATIVE:

POSITIVE:
4. Is it possible to be "law righteous" and not "heart righteous"? Explain your answer.
5.
 - A. From verse 4, what are the two requirements for having "communion with the Holy Spirit"?

 - B. What is another possible word for "not stiffnecked"?
6. CHALLENGE QUESTION: Why would the revelation that the Lamanites "drank the blood of beasts" (v.6) be noteworthy, and particularly horrifying to someone who "observed to keep the Law of Moses" (v.5)? (For help see Leviticus 7:26-27, as well as the entry for "Blood" in the Bible Dictionary.)
7. Name some ways in which Nephite society had changed since Lehi's family arrived?
8. From the verses in this reading (1-15), what is the promise [carrot] and threat [the stick] of the Book of Mormon that is a repeated theme of so many of the prophets?
9. How does verse 11 give us a model for our own church service?

10. PERSONAL: Verse 12 speaks of a particular use of the scriptures. How has the word of God functioned in this way in your life? Example?

Second Reading: Omni 1-13

9. How many authors do we hear from in the first 13 verses of Omni?

10. Name two things that you think characterized the Nephite world of this time period that are different from our own day?

11. Do you get any lesson from the failure of the first 4 writers of the Book of Omni to record more about their life or times?

Third Reading: Omni 10-30

12. In these verses, all the peoples of the Book of Mormon story are mentioned and identified, two of them for the first time. They are:

a. The people called the _____.

b. The people called the _____.

c. The people of _____. Their other name is not given in this chapter but you can find it by reading ahead: Mosiah 25:2. _____

d. The people of _____. You can find their other name by reading this one verse: Moroni 9:23. _____.

13. The last writer in Omni, Amalecki, wrote the most. Nothing is known of him except what we have in the 19 verses he wrote. Tell what kind of man you think he was from clues found in these verses.

READING NOTES: Amalecki writes about a king named Mosiah—let's call him Mosiah 1 to keep him separate from his grandson who is also named Mosiah (2), and who is the one the Book of Mosiah is named after. Nothing is known of the first Mosiah except what Amalecki records in these verses. The Mulekites had been extremely numerous but their numbers had apparently been decimated by wars. We are told that the "place of their first landing" was much farther North in the land called Desolation. (Alma 22:30) A man named Zarahemla had led the particular group of Mulekites Mosiah found there. There were presumably other Mulekite groups that had stayed in other Mesoamerican sites and cities that did not follow Zarahemla.

14. Amalecki introduces us to Mosiah's son, Benjamin, and explains to the reader that he was going to turn the collection of small plates that had been handed down to him over to this good king. Before ending his writings, he records his last heartfelt advice to those of us reading it hundreds of years later. What is one piece of his advice that particularly speaks to you and why?

Fourth Reading: Words of Mormon verses 1-9

READING NOTES: The Words of Mormon are an 18 verse insert by the editor of the volume we call the Book of Mormon. Sort of like, "...and now a word from our editor." Mormon is the editor's name and he inscribed a volume of plates as the Spirit of the Lord directed him. Sometimes he included the words of other authors in exact quotations and sometimes he abridged their accounts. His intent was to compress the history of his people into one volume. His editorial comments in The Words of Mormon were made "about 385 A.D." as it says in the footnotes. So these words break into the narrative history of the Nephite nation, written by a man who now knows the sad end of that story. What Mormon tells us in these 18 verses is that he is going to insert The Small Plates of Nephi [Prophet Plates] at this point, even though it re-covers some of the time period he has already written about in his earlier abridgement of The Large Plates of Nephi [King Plates]. He then catches the reader up on a little of the history of King Benjamin as he rejoins the narrative from the Large Plates again.

15. What was Mormon's perspective as he read many prophecies of Christ's coming written on the Small Plates of Nephi, including the 15 chapters from the Book of Isaiah?

16. A. Who did Mormon think would read the record he went to such effort to write?

B. One of the great Christian imperatives is that we "love our enemies." How does Mormon exemplify this command?

Fourth Reading: Words of Mormon verses 10-18

17. Who is the last person in the line of prophets or descendants of prophets that kept the Small Plates of Nephi and who did he deliver them to?

18. What part will the Book of Mormon play in the Day of Judgment? Cite verse.

19. A. Verse 14 tells us that "in the strength of the Lord" King Benjamin and his armies did "contend against their enemies, until they had slain many thousands of the Lamanites." How can someone love their enemy and yet kill that same enemy in battle?

B. Is there a lesson in this for us in our own lives?