

LESSON 17
“A Seer...Becometh a Great Benefit to His Fellow Beings”
Mosiah 7-11

OVERVIEW:

Ammon and his brethren find Limhi and his people. Ammon teaches Limhi of the importance of a seer. The record of Zeniff recounts a brief history of Zeniff's people. Abinadi warns the people, but they are blind to Noah's wickedness.

These chapters are primarily historical in nature. There is little of a doctrinal nature.

The Meaning of the name Mosiah: In 1965, John Sawyer published an article titled "What was a Mosiac?" He argues that the term *mosiah* was an ancient Hebrew term, like *go'el* ("redeemer, or avenger of blood"), or *sedeq* ("victor, savior"). Such terms originally had meaning in Hebrew daily life and culture but came to be used among their titles for God. The word *mosiac* (pronounced moe-shee-ah) is a word peculiar to Hebrew, a "word invariably implying a champion of justice in a situation of controversy, battle or oppression." Sawyer's analysis sheds interesting light on the name Mosiah in the Book of Mormon. Several subtle reasons show why Nephites, who continued to speak Hebrew in the New World, would have been attracted to the use of such a name or title. Apparently the form of the word Mosiah is a "hiphil participle" in Hebrew. It occurs in the Hebrew in Deuteronomy 22:27; 28:29; Judges 12:3; Psalms 18:41; and Isaiah 5:29-texts that in all probability were on the Plates of Brass. This word, however, was not transliterated into the English by the King James translators, and thus the Hebrew would not have been known to Joseph Smith. It was, however, known and used as a personal name in the Book of Mormon, as well as by people in the Jewish colony at Elephantine in the fifth century B.C. The key meaning of the word *mosiac* was "savior." People in danger cry out, "But there is no *mosia*" (Deuteronomy 22:27). After examining all occurrences of this term in the Hebrew Bible, Sawyer concludes that the term applied to a particular kind of person or role and was sometimes a title designating "a definite office or position." Typical of this office are the following traits: 1. The *mosiac* is a victorious hero appointed by God. 2. He liberates a chosen people from oppression, controversy, and injustice after they cry out for help. 3. Their deliverance is usually accomplished by means of a nonviolent escape or negotiation. 4. The immediate result of the coming of a *mosiac* was "escape from injustice, and a return to a state of justice where each man possesses his rightful property." 5. On a larger scale, "final victory means the coming of *mosicim* [plural, pronounced moe-shee-**eeem**] to rule like Judges over Israel." Thus the term also had judicial, legal, or forensic connotations, similar to the word *advocate*. A *mosiac* gives refuge to those on his "right hand" from their accusers in court (Psalm 17:7). (John W. Welch, ed., *Reexploring the Book of Mormon* [Salt Lake City and Provo: Deseret Book Co., Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1992], 107.)

The book of Mosiah contrasts the characters of Benjamin and Noah on at least seven points: their treatment of and attitude toward temples; their handling of conflicts with the Lamanites; their methods of succession; their use of and reaction to sermons; and their attitudes toward physical labor and service, the written word, and the living prophets. These contrasts give life to our understanding of the principle of dominion. For the ancients, character and personality were best seen in a person's deeds. Mormon followed this ancient philosophy in portraying the deeds of the two Nephite kings, Benjamin and Noah. But the deaths of the two monarchs also characterized their lives. Benjamin peacefully passed the kingdom to his son, retired from the kingship, and spent the last three years of mortality in peace. His obedience secured him a place in God's kingdom. On the other hand, Noah, who spent his life on the lusts and desires of the flesh, pronounced a death sentence on the one messenger who could have saved him from destruction. His cruel treatment of Abinadi became his own death sentence, though his desire

for power and dominion consumed his soul long before the physical flames ever touched his body. How fitting it is that Noah was consumed in flames of his own making. Mormon's graphic account of the two contrasting leaders makes the book of Mosiah vital reading for anyone who would aspire to lead others or who is called to lead others in the latter days. Mosiah II also recognized the great value of studying these two kings and concluded the book of Mosiah with a one- chapter summary of the lessons we should learn from them. Those who have dominion either follow the Messianic model of leadership by service (exemplified by Benjamin) or the satanic model of leadership by domination (exemplified by Noah). Leadership by service builds Zion, while leadership by domination builds Babylon. (Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate, Jr., eds., *Mosiah: Salvation Only through Christ* [Provo: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1991], 49, 57.)

SCRIPTURES:

THE BOOK OF MOSIAH CHAPTER 7

Ammon finds the land of Lehi-Nephi where Limhi is king—Limhi's people are in bondage to the Lamanites—Limhi recounts their history—A prophet (Abinadi) had testified that Christ is the God and Father of all things—Those who sow filthiness reap the whirlwind, and those who put their trust in the Lord shall be delivered. [About 121 B.C.]

1 AND now, it came to pass that after king Mosiah had had continual peace for the space of three years, he was desirous to know concerning the people who ^awent up (in altitude) to dwell in the land of ^bLehi-Nephi (south), or in the city of Lehi-Nephi; for his people had heard nothing from them from the time they left the land of ^cZarahemla (north); therefore, they wearied him with their teasings.

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

3 And it came to pass that on the morrow they started to go up, having with them one ^aAmmon, (Not the same Ammon who was a son of Helaman.) he being a strong and mighty man, and a ^bdescendant of Zarahemla (Mulekites – blood of Judah.); and he was also their leader. (Omni 1:28)

4 And now, they knew not the course they should travel in the wilderness to go up to the land of Lehi-Nephi; therefore they wandered many days in the wilderness, even ^aforty days did they wander. (Although this small band wandered for a total of 40 days, the distance between the city of Zarahemla and the city of Lehi-Nephi could be traveled in 20 days. This is how long it took Alma and his people to make the trek (see Mosiah 23:3; 24:25).)

5 And when they had wandered forty days they came to a ^ahill, (It must have been flat land if the hill was noted.) which is north of the land of ^bShilom, (In Semitic language, Shilom means “the land to the east” when you are facing south. It can also mean secure, safe. Nibley, TBM, 2:21) and there they pitched their tents.

6 And ^aAmmon took three of his brethren, and their names were Amaleki, Helem, and Hem, and they went down into the land of ^bNephi.

7 And behold, they met the king (Ammon and the four did this on purpose. They recognized them as the people they were looking for. Brant Gardner suggests that Ammon may have asked people of small villages in the area of their travels where the city was located.) of the people who were in the land of Nephi, and in the land of ^aShilom; and they were surrounded by the king's guard, and were ^btaken, and were ^cbound, and were committed to ^dprison. (Limhi thought Ammon and his brethren were the priests of Noah.)

8 And it came to pass when they had been in prison two days they were again brought before the king, and their bands were loosed; and they stood before the king, and were permitted, or rather ^acommanded, (probably inserted by Mormon) that they should answer the questions which he should ask them.

9 And he said unto them: Behold, I am ^aLimhi, the son of Noah, who was the son of Zeniff, who came up out of the ^bland of Zarahemla to inherit this land, which was the land of their fathers, who was made a ^cking by the ^dvoice of the people.

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

11 And now, for this cause have I suffered that ye should be preserved, that I might inquire of you, or else I should have caused that my guards should have put you to death. Ye are permitted to speak.

12 And now, when Ammon saw that he was permitted to speak, he went forth and ^abowed himself before the king; and rising again he said: O king, I am very thankful before God this day that I am yet alive, and am permitted to speak; and I will endeavor to speak with boldness;

13 For I am assured that if ye had known me ye would not have suffered that I should have worn these bands. For I am Ammon, and am a ^adescendant of Zarahemla, and have come up out of the ^bland of Zarahemla (The word Zarahemla means “red city.”) to inquire concerning our brethren, whom ^cZeniff brought up out of that land.

14 And now, it came to pass that after Limhi had heard the words of Ammon, he was exceedingly ^aglad, and said: Now, I know of a surety that my brethren who were in the land of Zarahemla are ^byet alive (It is possible that since those in Zarahemla had not communicated with Limhi’s people, they may have thought that the people of Zarahemla had all died. Mosiah 21:26 indicates that the people thought the people of Zarahemla had been destroyed.). And now, I will rejoice; and on the morrow I will cause that my people shall rejoice also.

15 For behold, we are in bondage to the Lamanites, and are ^ataxed with a tax which is grievous to be borne. And now, behold, our brethren will deliver us out of our ^bbondage, or out of the hands of the Lamanites, and we will be their ^cslaves; for it is better that we be slaves to the Nephites than to pay tribute to the king of the Lamanites. (This may be an exaggeration.)

16 And now, king Limhi commanded his guards that they should no more bind Ammon nor his brethren, but caused that they should go to the hill which was north of Shilom, and bring their brethren into the city, that thereby they might eat, and drink, and rest themselves from the labors of their journey; for they had suffered many things; they had suffered hunger, thirst, and fatigue.

17 And now, it came to pass on the morrow that king Limhi sent a proclamation among all his people, that thereby they might gather themselves together to the ^atemple, (The temple is at the heart of true worship among the Lord’s people throughout history.) to hear the words which he should speak unto them.

18 And it came to pass that when they had gathered themselves together that he ^aspoke unto them in this wise, saying: O ye, my people, lift up your heads and be comforted; for behold, the time is at hand (Mosiah 22), or is not far distant, when we shall no longer be in subjection to our enemies, notwithstanding our many strugglings, which have been in vain; yet I trust there ^bremaineth an effectual struggle to be made.

19 Therefore, lift up your heads (Limhi is telling his people to have faith.), and rejoice, and put your ^atrust in ^bGod, in that God who was the God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob; and also, that God who ^cbrought the children of ^dIsrael out of the land of Egypt, and caused that they should walk through the Red ^eSea on dry ground, and fed them with ^fmanna that they might not perish in the wilderness; and many more things did he do for them. (Testimony to the truth of the Old Testament.)

20 And again, that same God has brought our fathers ^aout of the land of Jerusalem, and has kept and preserved his people even until now; and behold, it is ^bbecause of our iniquities and abominations that he has brought us into bondage. (The fact that Limhi is recounting two exoduses supposes that Limhi is expecting that their deliverance will be in an exodus, not in overthrowing their captors. Ammon’s arrival gives the people of Limhi a place to go to. One reason that they did not leave sooner may be that the area was populated and their arrival in a populated area would have been unwelcomed.)

21 And ye all are witnesses this day, that Zeniff, who was made king over this people, he being ^aover-

zealous to inherit the land of his fathers (Bruce R. McConkie said: “Fanaticism is the devil's substitute for and perversion of true zeal. It is exhibited in wildly extravagant and overzealous views and acts. It is based either on unreasoning devotion to a cause, a devotion which closes the door to investigation and dispassionate study, or on an over emphasis of some particular doctrine or practice, an emphasis which twists the truth as a whole out of perspective. Through the ages religious fanatics have fought and died on the field of battle in false causes; in the Church there are those who became fanatics...Stable and sound persons are never fanatics; they do not ride gospel hobbies.” (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 275)), therefore being deceived by the cunning and craftiness of king Laman, who having entered into a treaty with king Zeniff, and having yielded up into his hands the possessions of a part of the land, or even the city of Lehi-Nephi, and the city of Shilom; and the land round about— (Using the words “over-zealous” and “deceived” were not how Zeniff described his going to the land of Nephi.)

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

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

24 Yea, I say unto you, great are the reasons which we have to ^amourn; for behold how many of our brethren have been slain, and their blood has been spilt in vain, and all because of iniquity.

25 For if this people had not fallen into transgression the Lord would not have suffered that this great evil should come upon them. But behold, they would not hearken unto his words; but there arose contentions among them, even so much that they did shed blood among themselves.

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

27 And because he said unto them that Christ was the ^aGod, the Father of all things, and said that he should take upon him the ^bimage of man, and it should be the ^cimage after which man was created in the beginning; or in other words, he said that man was created after the image of ^dGod, and that God should come down among the children of men, and take upon him flesh and blood, and go forth upon the face of the earth— (The Book of Mormon plainly teaches that Jesus Christ was the God of the Old Testament.)

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

29 For behold, the Lord hath said: (Since this quote is not cited, it must have been known to the people. It was probably from the brass plates or the large plates of Nephi.) I will not ^asuccor my people in the day of their transgression; but I will hedge up their ways that they prosper not; and their doings shall be as a ^bstumbling block before them.

30 And again, he saith: If my people shall sow ^afilthiness they shall ^breap the ^cchaff thereof (Law of the harvest.) in the whirlwind; and the effect thereof is poison (The chaff gets into your lungs will kill you.).

31 And again he saith: If my people shall sow filthiness they shall reap the ^aeast wind (the wind that comes from the Arabian desert which brings extreme heat and dust which brings drought – The character of the directional winds was so consistent, varying not in nature but only in degree throughout the seasons, that they came to be viewed as messengers from God. The north wind is cold; the west wind coming from the Mediterranean Sea is moist; the south, warm; and the east, which crosses the sandy wastes of the Arabian Desert before reaching Palestine, can be violent and destructive. It was called, “the wind of the wilderness.” DCBM, 2: 187), which bringeth immediate destruction. (Since this quote is not found in the Old Testament, it probably came from the brass plates. Reference to the east wind

was an old world reference giving support to the idea that this was a quote from the brass plates. This is most likely a quote from Zenock because it is similar to a quote found in Alma 33:16.)

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

33 But if ye will ^aturn to the Lord with full purpose of heart, and put your **trust** in him, and **serve** him with all ^bdiligence of mind, if ye do this, he will, according to his own will and pleasure (the Lord's timetable.), deliver you out of bondage. (Chapter 7 and 8 should be read together since they are one event.)

* Verse 2 [About 121 B.C.].

CHAPTER 8

Ammon teaches the people of Limhi—He learns of the twenty-four Jaredite plates—Ancient records can be translated by seers—The gift of seership exceeds all others. [About 121 B.C.]

1 AND it came to pass that after king Limhi had made an end of ^aspeaking to his people, for he spake many things unto them and only a few of them have I written in this book, he told his people all the things concerning their brethren who were in the land of Zarahemla. (Mormon includes some of Limhi's remarks because they deal with faith, sin, repentance and hope, concepts that Mormon believes will be important to us.)

2 And he caused that Ammon should stand up before the multitude, (Limhi has Ammon speak to the people as proof of his claims of an imminent deliverance.) and rehearse unto them all that had happened unto their brethren from the time that ^aZeniff went up out of the land even until the time that he ^bhimself came up out of the land.

3 And he also rehearsed unto them the last words which king Benjamin had ^ataught them, and explained them to the people of king Limhi, so that they might understand all the words which he spake. (Mormon has abridged King Benjamin's words since he gave us the details earlier.)

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

5 And it came to pass that he caused that the ^aplates which contained the ^brecord of his people from the time that they left the ^cland of Zarahemla, should be brought before Ammon, that he might read them. (The large plates of Nephi were kept by Mosiah in Zarahemla and are different than these plates. Limhi's plates contain the record of his people from the days of king Zeniff to his day. This is the record from which Mormon will take his abridgment, comprising Mosiah 9-22. We must remember that there are many sets of plates other than the large and small plates of Nephi. In this chapter, we learn of the plates of Limhi's people and the 24 gold plates of the Jaredites. Mormon is severely editing here. This verse follows immediately upon the closure of the public event without any intervening text to show a difference in time or place. There were surely both. By its very nature, the discourse of Limhi before his people was public. This verse, however, describes a very non-public event. The records of the Limhites are brought to Ammon to read. We learn here that Zeniff's people kept records on plates and that they were brought to Ammon. Plates are inherently heavier than paper would be, and this suggests that Ammon may have moved away from the public dais to a location somewhat more in proximity to the place where the records were kept – most likely the palace of the king. In Mesoamerican public architecture, the residence of the king would frequently be near the main temple, and the main temple would have been the location for this public ceremony, so they would not have traveled far, and perhaps this is the reason Mormon makes no mention of the change of location. Brant Gardner.)

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

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

8 And they were lost in the wilderness for the space of ^amany days, yet they were diligent, and found not the land of Zarahemla but returned to this land, having traveled in a land among many waters, having discovered a land which was covered with ^bbones of men, and of beasts, and was also covered with ruins of buildings of every kind, having discovered a land which had been peopled with a people who were as numerous as the hosts of Israel. (This is a pretty good clue to the size of the Jaredite civilization because we know the number of the hosts of Israel. While in Sinai, the Lord commanded Moses to number the hosts of Israel. The result of the census was that there were 603,550 men over age 19 (Num 1:45-47). This number excluded all women, children, and the tribe of Levi which was later counted to have 22,000 men and boys (Num 3:39). Therefore, the total number of the camp must have been well over 1 million people, and the Jaredites also must have numbered in the millions. Near the end of the Jaredite civilization, Coriantumr mourns that two millions of his people had been slain by the sword (Ether 15:2).)

9 And for a testimony that the things that they had said are true they have brought ^atwenty-four plates which are filled with engravings, and they are of pure gold. (The record of the Jaredites.)

10 And behold, also, they have brought ^abreastplates, which are large, and they are of ^bbrass and of copper, and are perfectly sound.

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

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

13 Now Ammon said unto him: I can assuredly tell thee, O king, of a man that can ^atranslate the records; for he has wherewith that he can look, and translate all records that are of ancient date; and it is a gift from God. And the things are called ^binterpreters, (The interpreters are the Urim and Thummim that the Lord had given to the brother of Jared (Ether 3:23; 4:5). The brother of Jared wrote his vision of the inhabitants of the earth in the Jaredite form of the Adamic language. The Lord knew that no subsequent people would be able to interpret this language without divine help. The Urim and Thummim were designed just for a seer like Mosiah to use to translate the record. Apparently, Mosiah had received the interpreters which were had by the kings. His grandfather (also named Mosiah) had used them to interpret the large stone of the Jaredites (Omni 1:20). The term used when describing translation with the Urim and Thummim is 'by the gift and power of God.' This is the way we describe the translation of the Book of Mormon, by the gift and power of God (Moroni's Title Page). This same Urim and Thummim spoken of in Mosiah 8:13 is the Urim and Thummim that was buried with the gold plates. It was the tool which Joseph Smith used to translate the Book of Mormon—especially early on. He described them as follows, there were two stones in silver bows—and these stones, fastened to a breastplate, constituted what is called the Urim and Thummim—deposited with the plates; and the possession and use of these stones were what constituted “seers” in ancient or former times; and that God had prepared them for the purpose of translating the book. (JS-H 1:35). This Urim and Thummim was taken with the plates by Moroni after Joseph was done translating. There was at least one more Urim and Thummim because Abraham had one (Abr 3:1) and Moses had one that was placed in the breastplate of judgment (Ex 28:30). Bruce R. McConkie said: “The Hebrew words *urim* and *thummim*, both plural, mean lights and perfections. Presumably one of the stones is called Urim and the other Thummim. Ordinarily they are carried in a breastplate over the heart. (Ex. 28:30; Lev. 8:8)...President Joseph Fielding Smith, with reference to the seer stone and the Urim and Thummim, has written: ‘ We have been taught since the days of the Prophet that the Urim and Thummim were returned with the plates to the angel. We have no record of the Prophet having the Urim and Thummim after the

organization of the Church.” (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 818) The Urim and Thummim delivered to Joseph Smith for use in translating the Book of Mormon was the same one the brother of Jared had. DCBM, 2:191.) and no man can look in them except he be commanded, lest he should look for that he ought not and he should perish (A person might look into the stones and be tempted to use the revealed information unrighteously.). And whosoever is commanded to look in them, the same is called ^cseer.

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

15 And the king said that a ^aseer is greater than a prophet. (This is a question, not a statement. Ammon then states that a seer is also a prophet and a revelator. “A seer, ‘ wrote Elder John A. Widtsoe, ‘is one who sees with spiritual eyes. He perceives the meaning of that which seems obscure to others; therefore he is an interpreter and clarifier of eternal truth. He foresees the future from the past and the present. This he does by the power of the Lord operating through him directly, or indirectly with the aid of divine instruments such as the Urim and Thummim. In short, he is one who sees, who walks in the Lord's light with open eyes.’ (Evidences and Reconciliations, p. 258.)” (McConkie and Millet, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, vol. 2, p. 192))

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

17 But a seer can know of things which are past, (a seer can know the real truth) and also of things which are to come, and by them shall all things be revealed, or, rather, shall secret things be made manifest, and hidden things shall come to light, and things which are not known shall be made known by them, and also things shall be made known by them which otherwise could not be known. (It is generally supposed that a prophet is one who prophesies, meaning one who foretells the future. In fact, one can be a prophet without doing so. The role of a prophet is to proclaim the word of God by the authority of the Holy Ghost. More specifically, a prophet is one who has and declares the testimony of Jesus (See Revelation 19:10). A prophet's primary role is to be a forthteller rather than a foreteller. To call a man a prophet is to emphasize his role in declaring the word of God, whereas to call him a seer is to emphasize the manner in which that word was received. Thus it is properly said that a seer is greater than a prophet because all seers are prophets but not all prophets are seers. Among the special spiritual gifts granted the seer is the ability to restore, interpret, and understand the past. In so doing the seer may by the use of various interpreters translate ancient records that have been written in languages that now are otherwise indecipherable. This is what Mosiah did in translating the records of the Jaredites and what Joseph Smith did in translating the Book of Mormon. Ammon's comments relative to a seer as translator, couched in a conversation about ancient records, were not intended to be a complete description of the seer's role. Enoch, ‘beheld the spirits that God had created; and he beheld also things which were not visible to the natural eye; and from thenceforth came the saying abroad in the land: A seer hath the Lord raised up unto his people.’ (Moses 6:36) A seer is a visionary in the highest sense, one who can ‘see afar off.’ DCBM, 2:191-192.

18 Thus God has provided a means that man, through faith, might work mighty miracles; therefore he becometh a great benefit to his fellow beings (The First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, all prophets, seers and revelators. How does a seer become a great benefit to his fellow beings? By revealing God to them.).

19 And now, when Ammon had made an end of speaking these words the king rejoiced exceedingly, and gave thanks to God, saying: Doubtless a ^agreat mystery is contained within these plates, and these interpreters were doubtless prepared for the purpose of unfolding all such mysteries to the children of men. (The great mystery contained on the 24 plates includes the Book of Ether. Moroni said, I take mine account from the twenty and four plates which were found by the people of Limhi, which is called the Book of Ether (Ether 1:2). But Moroni abridged the record and did not include all of the prophecies of the brother of Jared. They were withheld because of their greatness, for the Lord showed unto the

brother of Jared all the inhabitants of the earth which had been, and also all that would be (Ether 3:25). This great revelation is to come forth when the people are ready, in that day that they shall exercise faith in me, saith the Lord even as the brother of Jared did, that they may become sanctified in me, then will I manifest unto them the things which the brother of Jared saw, even to the unfolding unto them all my revelations (Ether 4:7).

20 O how marvelous are the works of the Lord, and how long doth he suffer with his people; yea, and how ^ablind and impenetrable are the understandings of the children of men; for they will not seek wisdom, neither do they desire that she should rule over them! (In Hebrew and other languages of the ancient Near East wisdom is a feminine noun. DCBM, 2:193)

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

THE RECORD OF ZENIFF—*An account of his people, from the time they left the land of Zarahemla until the time that they were delivered out of the hands of the Lamanites. Comprising chapters 9 to 22 inclusive.* (Mormon inserts this history of the people of Zeniff. It comprises about 70 years and three kings, Zeniff, Noah, and Limhi. It is important to remember that chronologically this is a flashback—to tell us what happened to these people and give background for the state of affairs with Limhi's people. This record includes chapters 9-22 and is taken from the plates spoken of in Mosiah 8:5.)

CHAPTER 9

Zeniff leads a group from Zarahemla to possess the land of Lehi-Nephi—The Lamanite king permits them to inherit the land—There is war between the Lamanites and Zeniff's people. [About 200—187 B.C.]

1. 1 ^aI, ^bZeniff, having been taught in all the language of the Nephites, and having had a knowledge of the land of ^cNephi, or of the land of our fathers' first inheritance, *and having been sent as a spy among the Lamanites that I might spy out their forces, that our army might come upon them and destroy them—but when I saw that which was good among them I was desirous that they should not be destroyed.

2 Therefore, I contended with my brethren in the wilderness, for I would that our ruler should make a treaty with them; but he being an austere and a blood-thirsty man commanded that I should be slain; but I was rescued by the shedding of much blood; for father fought against father, and brother against brother, until the greater number of our army was destroyed in the wilderness; and we returned, those of us that were spared, to the land of Zarahemla, to relate that tale to their wives and their children.

3 And yet, I being ^aover-zealous to inherit the land of our fathers, collected as many as were desirous to go up to possess the land, and started again on our ^bjourney into the wilderness to go up to the land; but we were smitten with famine and sore afflictions; for we were slow to remember the Lord our God.

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

5 And it came to pass that I went again with four of my men into the city, in unto the king, that I might know of the disposition of the king, and that I might know if I might go in with my people and possess the land in peace.

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

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

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

9 And we began to till the ground, yea, even with all manner of ^aseeds, with seeds of corn, and of wheat, and of barley, and with neas, and with sheum, (Nobody knows exactly what crop or grain is represented by these words. That Joseph Smith would not be able to describe in 1829 English every word or term used by the Nephites is evidence for the authenticity of the Book of Mormon: “Together with ‘neas and sheum’ of Mosiah 9:9 and ‘cureloms and cumoms’ of Ether 9:19, we have some very convincing examples of what are technically known as *hapax legomena*. Linguistically, such terms are a part of almost all ancient records. Indeed they become a check on their age. *Hapax legomena* are terms which cannot be translated, only transliterated—that is, put into the sounds of a language.” (Richard H. Cracoft, Neal E. Lambert, *A Believing People: Literature of the Latter-Day Saints*, p. 143)) and with seeds of all manner of fruits; and we did begin to multiply and prosper in the land.

10 Now it was the cunning and the craftiness of king ^aLaman, (This is probably a throne name not his real name. He also has a son named Laman who succeeds him. (Mosiah 24:3) The Nephites also called their kings Nephi.) to ^bbring my people into bondage, that he yielded up the land that we might possess it.

11 Therefore it came to pass, that after we had dwelt in the land for the space of ^{*}twelve years that king Laman began to grow uneasy, lest by any means my people should ^awax strong in the land, and that they could not overpower them and bring them into bondage. (It is not reasonable to assume that the people became stronger with the increase in the children of the people. 12 years would not have been enough time for their children to have grown up to be much of a threat. They probably grew strong because other people moved in with them including many able bodied men which then became a threat to Laman’s people. It’s also possible that Laman’s people were preparing to war with other people and attacked them as well.)

12 Now they were a ^alazy and an ^bidolatrous people; therefore they were desirous to bring us into bondage, that they might glut themselves with the labors of our hands; yea, that they might feast themselves upon the flocks of our fields.

13 Therefore it came to pass that king Laman began to stir up his people (this is probably not accurate) that they should contend with my people; therefore there began to be wars and contentions in the land.

14 For, in the ^{*}thirteenth year of my reign in the land of Nephi, away on the south of the land of ^aShilom, when my people were watering and ^bfeeding their flocks, and tilling their lands, a numerous host of Lamanites came upon them and began to slay them, and to take off their flocks, and the corn of their fields. (This seems to be a band of thieves instead of an attack done by Laman and his people. Zeniff’s people are already in subjection and the people of Laman could have taken the flocks and corn at any time anyway.)

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

16 And it came to pass that I did arm them with bows, and with arrows, with swords, and with cimeters, and with clubs, and with slings, and with all manner of weapons which we could invent, and I and my people did go forth against the Lamanites to battle.

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

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

19 And I, myself, with mine own hands, did help to bury their dead. And behold, to our great sorrow and lamentation, two hundred and seventy-nine of our brethren were slain. (3,043 Lamanites killed while 279 Nephites died. How could a smaller army kill so many Lamanites. Here is a possible way from Brant Gardner: 1. The Lamanite attack killed Zeniffites, and therefore justified and required the killing of Lamanites. Remember that Lamanite is a generic term. 2. The Lamanites would have retreated from

out of the area with their spoils. If they were after spoils, there was no reason to stay when they had achieved their goal. Nevertheless, the Zeniffites were able to kill three thousand Lamanites in a very short period of time. This means they had to find them, and finding them in their homes would be the easiest. This was not an extended hunt, but an attack on apparently known positions. 3. The ratio of losses indicates that the Zeniffites had the element of surprise. In hand to hand combat one would not expect such a large difference to occur that fast, unless the Zeniffites were superior in personal strength or weaponry. Either of those two are possible, but not likely. It is also quite likely that the Zeniffites were smaller in number (not just casualties). This further suggests a surprise attack. A band of Lamanites who had attacked Nephites would certainly be prepared for retaliation, or at least wary of it. 4. Finally, the result is that the Lamanites are driven from the Zeniffite lands (verse 18). This could apply to causing a standing army to leave, but makes more sense as the removal of hamlets occupied by Lamanites.)

* Verse 1 [About 200 B.C.]; Verse 11 [About 188 B.C.]; Verse 14 [About 187 B.C.].

CHAPTER 10

King Laman dies—His people are wild and ferocious and believe in false traditions—Zeniff and his people prevail against them. [About 178—160 B.C.]

1 AND it came to pass that we again began to establish the kingdom and we again began to possess the land in peace. And I caused that there should be ^aweapons of war made of every kind, that thereby I might have weapons for my people against the time the Lamanites should come up again to war against my people.

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

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

4 And I did cause that the men should till the ground, and raise all manner of ^agrain and all manner of fruit of every kind.

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

6 And it came to pass that king ^aLaman died, and his son began to reign in his stead. And he began to stir his people up in rebellion against my people; therefore they began to prepare for war, and to come up to battle against my people.

7 But I had sent my spies out round about the land of ^aShemlon, that I might discover their preparations, that I might guard against them, that they might not come upon my people and destroy them.

8 And it came to pass that they came up upon the north of the land of Shilom, with their numerous hosts, men ^aarmed with ^bbows, and with arrows, and with swords, and with cimeters, and with stones, and with slings; and they had their heads shaved that they were naked (their heads. This showed their determination to not be captured. Kill or be killed.); and they were girded with a leathern girdle about their loins. (Motorcycle gang? Dressing up is an essential part of soldiering. In any other line it would be considered overdoing it, but you have to distinguish rank and superiority. The purpose of the military, of course, is to break the enemy's will, not to destroy them. The Lamanites don't want to destroy the Nephites; they want the Nephites to work for them. That's the whole thing – they want to enslave them... You want to discourage the enemy and make him lose heart, so you make yourself look as terrible as you can when you approach. That will break his spirit sometimes if you look very awful, and they thought it would work. Intimidation is the quickest and easiest way of dominance, so you try that

and see if it will work. Hugh Nibley, TBM, 2:44-45.)

9 And it came to pass that I caused that the women and children of my people should be hid in the wilderness; and I also caused that all my old men that could bear arms, and also all my young men that were able to bear arms, should gather themselves together to go to battle against the Lamanites; and I did place them in their ranks, every man according to his age. (The Nephites were mobilized and organized according to the pattern of Israel. By age is the easiest, the most obvious, and the most natural and workable way – people of the same age groups working together. So that’s what he did. Nibley, TBM, 2:45)

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

11 Now, the Lamanites knew nothing concerning the Lord, nor the strength of the Lord, therefore they depended upon their own strength. Yet they were a strong people, as to the ^astrength of men. (Just like America today.)

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

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

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

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

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

17 And thus they have taught their children that they should hate them, and that they should murder them, and that they should rob and plunder them, and do all they could to destroy them; therefore they have an eternal hatred towards the children of Nephi.

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

19 And now I, Zeniff, after having told all these things unto my people concerning the Lamanites, I did stimulate them to go to battle with their might, putting their trust in the Lord; therefore, we did contend with them, face to face. (We qualify by being weak. The Lord explains how he can make us much stronger. The only safe defense you have is this, and it’s the perfect defense. It includes three things we find in Moses 7:32. He gave Adam all three things to defend himself: First, he says he will give you knowledge. In the Garden of Eden he gave Adam knowledge. That’s a good thing to have – knowledge of what’s going on. And then you have to have instructions, advice. That’s what you asked for. The Lord gave knowledge and instruction, and then when they went wrong, he gave them correction. He tells you when you are making mistakes. So you have information, you have advice, and you have correction – and you have it from one who knows everything. If you follow that, you are perfectly safe. Hugh Nibley, TBM, 2:47-48.)

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

21 And it came to pass that we returned again to our own land, and my people again began to ^atend their

flocks, and to till their ground.

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

* Verse 3 [About 178 B.C.]; Verse 22 [Probably about 160 B.C.].

CHAPTER 11

King Noah rules in wickedness—He revels in riotous living with his wives and concubines—Abinadi prophesies that the people will be taken into bondage—His life is sought by King Noah. [Between 160 and 150 B.C.]

1 AND now it came to pass that Zeniff conferred the kingdom upon Noah, one of his sons; therefore Noah began to reign in his stead; and he did not walk in the ways of his father.

2 For behold, he did not keep the commandments of God, but he did walk after the desires of his own heart. And he had many wives and ^aconcubines. And he did ^bcause his people to commit sin, and do that which was ^cabominable in the sight of the Lord. Yea, and they did commit ^dwhoredoms and ^eall manner of wickedness. (The breaking up of the family. The Proclamation on the Family presented by the Apostles to strengthen families.)

3 And he laid a ^atax of one fifth part of all they possessed, a fifth part of their gold and of their silver, and a fifth part of their ^bziff, (Hebrew for brightness.) and of their copper, and of their brass and their iron; and a fifth part of their fatlings; and also a fifth part of all their grain. (Is this suggesting that when taxes reach the 20% level, that there is a serious problem with the government? Our tax percentage is around 40%. Oops, we're in trouble. Now that was a perfectly normal tax in all ancient societies. It was not oppressive; you could still prosper with it. But of course, the problem was what it was used for – the waste it was put to. Nibley, TBM, 2:52)

4 And all this did he take to ^asupport himself, and his wives and his ^bconcubines; and also his priests, and their wives and their concubines; thus he had changed the affairs of the kingdom. (It wasn't so much the rate of tax that was the problem, but how the taxes were used.)

5 For he put down all the priests that had been consecrated by his father (It is possible that Abinadi was one of these priests that had been removed.), and consecrated new ^aones in their stead, such as were lifted up in the pride of their hearts. (Of interest but unclear in the Book of Mormon is what authority if any the priests had who were consecrated by Zeniff. Assuming Zeniff to have been properly ordained, it may well be that Alma traced his authority to this source. (Mosiah 18:18) DCBM, 2:200. Question: Where did Zeniff get his power to consecrate the priests? Answer: They came out of the land of Lehi-Nephi and Mosiah was in charge. He got it from Mosiah. Mosiah's authority was passed down from the beginning. He was Nephite too and had it from Nephi; it came through that line. Nibley, TBM, 2:53.)

6 Yea, and thus they were supported in their laziness, and in their idolatry, and in their whoredoms, by the taxes which king Noah had put upon his people; thus did the people labor exceedingly to support iniquity.

7 Yea, and they also became idolatrous, because they were deceived by the vain and flattering words of the king and priests; for they did speak flattering things unto them. (Unrighteous governments in all ages have maintained power by appealing to the vanity of the people over whom they rule. Two of the most common ways of doing this are (1) building large buildings and other highly visible monuments that supposedly demonstrate the greatness and prestige of the nation and (2) being victorious in warfare, demonstrating the supposed superiority of one's forces over those of a foe. Vain people allow themselves to be seduced by such meaningless and shallow displays of presumed glory. President Spencer Kimball said: The Lord has blessed us as a people with a prosperity unequaled in times past. The resources that have been placed in our power are good, and necessary to our work here on the earth. But I am afraid that many of us have been surfeited with flocks and herds and acres and barns and

wealth and have begun to worship them as false gods, and they have power over us. Do we have more of these good things than our faith can stand? Many people spend most of their time working in the service of a self-image that includes sufficient money, stocks, bonds, investment portfolios, property, credit cards, furnishings, automobiles, and the like to guarantee carnal security throughout, it is hoped, a long and happy life. As the Lord himself said in our day, “They seek not the Lord to establish his righteousness, but every man walketh in his own way, and after the image of his own god, whose image is the likeness of the world, and whose substance is that of an idol, which waxeth old and shall perish in Babylon, even Babylon the great, which shall fall. D&C 1:16. Ensign, June 1976, p. 4-5. Kent P. Jackson and Morgan W. Tanner, *Studies in Scriptures*, 7:232.)

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

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

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

11 And the seats which were set apart for the ^ahigh priests, which were above all the other seats, he did ornament with pure gold; and he caused a breastwork to be built before them, that they might rest their bodies and their arms upon while they should speak lying and vain words to his people.

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

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

14 And it came to pass that he placed his heart upon his riches, and he spent his time in ^ariotous living with his wives and his concubines; and so did also his priests spend their time with harlots.

15 And it came to pass that he planted vineyards round about in the land; and he built wine-presses, and made ^awine in abundance; and therefore he became a wine-bibber, and also his people.

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

17 And king Noah sent guards round about the land to keep them off; but he did not send a sufficient number, and the Lamanites came upon them and killed them, and drove many of their flocks out of the land; thus the Lamanites began to destroy them, and to exercise their hatred upon them.

18 And it came to pass that king Noah sent his armies against them, and they were driven back, or they drove them back for a time; therefore, they returned rejoicing in their spoil. (They didn't take back that which was stolen, but spoil.)

19 And now, because of this great victory they were lifted up in the pride of their hearts; they did ^aboast in their own strength, saying that their fifty could stand against thousands of the Lamanites; and thus they did boast, and did delight in blood, and the shedding of the blood of their brethren, and this because of the wickedness of their king and priests. (Spencer W. Kimball said: “We are a warlike people, easily distracted from our assignment of preparing for the coming of the Lord. When enemies rise up, we commit vast resources to the fabrication of gods of stone and steel – ships, planes, missiles, fortifications – and depend on them for protection and deliverance. When threatened, we become anti-enemy instead of pro-kingdom of God; we train a man in the art of war and call him a patriot, thus, in the manner of Satan's counterfeit of true patriotism, perverting the Savior's teaching: “Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven. Matt 5:44-45. What are we

to fear when the Lord is with us? Can we not take the Lord at his word and exercise a particle of faith in him? Our assignment is affirmative: to forsake the things of the world as ends in themselves; to leave off idolatry and press forward in faith; to carry the gospel to our enemies, that they might no longer be our enemies. Ensign, June 1976, p. 6.)

20 And it came to pass (Mormon has set the stage for what he really wants to tell us, and that is the story of Abinadi.) that there was a man among them whose name was ^aAbinadi; *and he went forth among them, and began to prophesy, saying: Behold, thus saith the Lord, and thus hath he commanded me, saying, Go forth, and say unto this people, thus saith the Lord—Wo be unto this people, for I have seen their abominations, and their wickedness, and their whoredoms; and except they repent I will ^bvisit them in mine anger.

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

22 And it shall come to pass that they shall ^aknow that I am the Lord their God, and am a ^bjealous God, visiting the iniquities of my people. (God will chastise us to help us to return to him.)

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

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

25 And except they repent in ^asackcloth (goat hair) and ashes, and cry mightily to the Lord their God, I will not ^bhear their prayers, neither will I deliver them out of their afflictions; and thus saith the Lord, and thus hath he commanded me. (After two years, Abinadi came again among the people, this time in disguise, to deliver a second message (Mosiah 12:1) Notice that the nature of his message has changed. The judgements he enumerates are not conditional. Again and again Abinadi employs phrases like, “I will visit them in mine anger”, or “it shall come to pass” or “they shall be smitten.” (See Mosiah 12:1-7) The only conditional warning of this message is the final one: And it shall come to pass that except they repent I will utterly destroy them from off the face of the earth . . . (Mosiah 12:8))

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

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

28 I command you to bring Abinadi hither, that I may slay him, for he has said these things that he might ^astir up my people to anger one with another, and to raise contentions among my people; therefore I will slay him.

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

* Verse 20 [About 150 B.C.].

BIBLE DICTIONARY SEER

“A seer is a revelator and a prophet also” (Mosiah 8: 15-16), and when necessary he can use the Urim and Thummim or holy interpreters (Mosiah 8: 13; Mosiah 28: 16). There have been many seers in the history of God’s people on this earth, but not so many as there have been prophets. “A seer is greater than a prophet . . . and a gift which is greater can no man have . . .” (Mosiah 8: 15-18). Joseph Smith is the great seer of the latter days. In addition, the First Presidency, the Council of the Twelve, and the Patriarch to the Church are sustained as prophets, seers, and revelators. For other references see 1 Sam.

9: 9; 2 Sam. 24: 11; 2 Kgs. 17: 13; 1 Chr. 29: 29; 2 Chr. 9: 29; 2 Chr. 33: 19; Isa. 29: 10; Isa. 30: 10; JST John 1: 42; 2 Ne. 3: 6-14; D&C 21: 1; D&C 107: 92; D&C 124: 94, 125; D&C 127: 12; D&C 135: 3; Moses 6: 36, 38.

BIBLE DICTIONARY URIM AND THUMMIM

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

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

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