

SEARCH PARTY TO LEHI-NEPHI

(Mosiah 4,5:1-9)

CHAPTER 4

Benjamin decides to take the names of all of those who made this covenant (v.1), and there were none among the audience who didn't covenant except little children (v.2). Benjamin sets the kingdom in order for the last time (v.3-4). He consecrates Mosiah to be king and sets up priests to go out and teach the people, and remind them of the covenant they have made. He then dismisses everyone and sends them home.

Mormon takes care of some basic timekeeping and history (v.5-11). He then comments on Mosiah's kingship informing us that Mosiah walks in his father's footsteps (v.8-11).

1. What two measures were taken to follow up on the covenant Benjamin's people made?

CHAPTER 5

V1-9

Three years into a peaceful reign as king the people start bugging him about the fate of a splinter group that left the Nephites some 80 years earlier, (see Omni 1:48-54). This group returned back to the original land settled by Nephi after the split with Laman and Lemuel (v.1-2). After sufficient nagging, Mosiah relents and sends a group of 16 strong men (v.3) for a journey with little to guide them into potentially hostile territory occupied by the Lamanites (v.5). The group is led by a Mulekite named Ammon, who is a descendant of Zarahemla (v.4). After wandering for over a month, the group gets close to the land of Nephi, so they climb up on a hill to camp, and perhaps to better survey the land of Nephi as well (v.5). Then Ammon and three others head down into the land of Nephi (v.7).

While the land is called "Nephi", it is occupied by the Lamanites. And, while the Nephites and Lamanites are not presently actively at war, the reason for the current cessation of hostilities was the Lamanites being routed badly by king Benjamin. How much time has elapsed since then isn't clear from the text, but it is less than one generation. This probably explains why sixteen "strong men" are sent, and why the bulk of the party is left on the hill while four go into the land of Nephi. If the four don't return, the others can go back and report.

1. What was the purpose of sending sixteen "strong men" to the land of Lehi-Nephi?