

Lesson Highlights

- *Korihor leads away the hearts of many in Zarahemla.*
- *Korihor is taken before Alma, who testifies of Christ's coming.*
- *Alma leads a mission to reclaim the apostate Zoramites.*

A study of this lesson will help us learn how to recognize and refute false teachings and stay true to our testimonies of Jesus Christ.

Next Week:

Lesson 28:
"The Word Is in Christ unto Salvation",
 Alma 32-35

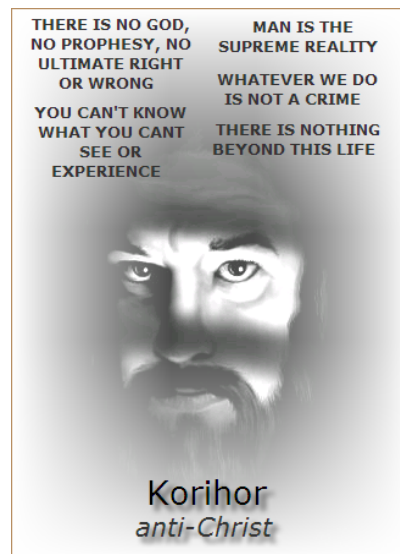
Green Mountain 1st Ward
 Lakewood, Colorado
 Doug Simpson

Introduction

Think of a place that exists but that you have never visited. Why do you believe that this place exists?

This lesson discusses a man who claimed that we cannot know of things we have not seen. Korihor argued that a person who had not seen God could not know of His existence. But just as we have others' accounts to help us know of places we have not seen, we have the testimony of prophets, the scriptures, and the gift of the Holy Ghost to help us know that God does exist and that His gospel is true.

The teachings of Korihor are common in the world today. Understanding how the people responded to his falsehoods can help us when we are faced with similar false philosophies and ideas.



Korihor led away the hearts of many in Zarahemla.

After establishing the people of Ammon in the land of Jershon and driving the warring Lamanites out of the land, the Nephites lived in peace during the 16th year of the reign of the judges and most of the 17th year.

Alma 30:6, 12 Near the end of the 17th year, an anti-Christ name Korihor came to the land of Zarahemla and disrupted the peace of the people.

What is an anti-Christ? In the Bible Dictionary, under "Antichrist," 609, we find that an anti-Christ is "anyone or anything that counterfeits the true gospel or plan of salvation and that openly or secretly is set up in opposition to Christ."

Alma 30:12-18 Some of the false teachings Korihor spread among the people of Zarahemla included:

- a) There will be "no Christ. ..." *Ye cannot know of things which ye do not see; therefore ye cannot know that there shall be a Christ*" (Alma 30:12-15).

Korihor was taken before Alma, who testified of Christ's coming.

After spreading his false teachings in Zarahemla, Korihor attempted to preach the same things among the people in Jershon and Gideon. Unlike the people in Zarahemla, however, these people provided good examples of how we should respond when we are confronted by people like Korihor.

- b) *No man can know of anything which is to come*" (Alma 30:13). It was contradictory for Korihor to say that no one could know of things to come but also to declare that there would be no Christ. Belief in the Atonement "is the effect of a frenzied mind" (Alma 30:16).
- c) *"Every man prosper[s] according to his genius, and ...every man conquer[s] according to his strength"* (Alma 30:17).
- d) *"Whatsoever a man [does is] no crime"* (Alma 30:17).
- e) *"When a man [is] dead, that [is] the end thereof"* (Alma 30:18).

Alma 30:18 Korihor's teachings encouraged the people who listened to him to sin and commit whoredoms, believing that there was no life after mortality ended and therefore, no punishment for sin.

These teachings lead people to sin because our daily choices are heavily influenced by our knowledge of Jesus Christ, the Atonement, and life after death and the consequences that accompany our choices.

Dealing with Modern-Day Korihors

Alma 30:19-21 The people of Ammon refused to listen and physically expelled him from their land when Korihor tried to spread his false teachings among them. Their actions demonstrated that they were "more wise" than the Nephites in Zarahemla because the people of Zarahemla listened to Korihor's false teachings; the people of Ammon and the people in Gideon would not. Consider how we can be wise and use discernment in similar situations.

President Ezra Taft Benson: *"The Book of Mormon exposes the enemies of Christ. It confounds false doctrines and lays down contention. It fortifies the humble followers of Christ against the evil designs, strategies, and doctrines of the devil in our day. The type of apostates in the Book of Mormon are similar to the type we have today. God, with his infinite foreknowledge, so molded the Book of Mormon that we might see the error and know how to combat philosophical concepts of our time."* (Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson, p56)

Alma 30:23-24, 27-28, 31. False accusations Korihor made against the Church leaders included: teaching the people foolish traditions, binding them with foolish ordinances and performances, usurping power and authority, keeping the people ignorant, humiliating them, supporting false prophecies, glutting themselves off the labor of the people, and teaching of an unknown God who never has been or will be seen.

Ponder what Korihor's reason for these accusations was and further, consider how obeying our Church leaders actually helps make us free rather than bring us into bondage, as Korihor claimed.

Alma 30:32-35 Alma responded to Korihor's accusations against Church leaders, stating plainly that they served without any monetary compensation for Church service and furthermore, their teachings should be judged on the effect on the people because those teachings brought joy to the people. Alma's response was truth. Knowing the truth helps us when we are confronted with false teachings.

Alma 30:39 Alma responded to Korihor's claim that there is no God by bearing personal testimony.

Alma 30:42 Alma was able to discern that Korihor actually believed in God but was possessed by a lying spirit.

Moroni 10:5 teaches us how to discern the truth--by the power of the Holy Ghost.

Alma led a mission to reclaim the apostate Zoramites.

Alma 31:1-6 Alma decided to go on a mission to reclaim the Zoramites because he was grieved by their idol worship. In addition, the Nephites were concerned that the Zoramites would join with the Lamanites.

Alma 31:5 Alma believed that he and his brethren should preach the word of God because it inspires people to choose the right and be just and it was more powerful in changing lives than anything else--including the sword! Ponder how you have seen the word of God bring about change in people's lives.

Alma 31:8-9 The Zoramites had been members of the Church, but they had *"fallen into great errors"* and refused to keep the Law of Moses as they had been commanded to do.

Alma 31:9-11 They fell into apostasy because they were disobedient, unfaithful, and refused to humble themselves in prayer and supplication to God. This should cause us to consider what we can do to guard against individual apostasy.

Alma 30:44 When Korihor asked for a sign of God's existence, the signs Alma put forth as evidence that God lives included citing the testimony of *"all these thy brethren,...the prophets, the scriptures, and ...all things."* To confront falsehoods, we should remember to teach the truth from the prophets and the scriptures.

Alma 30:45 Even after Alma's testimony, Korihor continued to demand to be shown a sign.

Alma 30:49-50 Korihor received his sign when Alma pronounced that he would be struck dumb and have no utterance--and it was so.

Alma 30:47 This sign was given because it would be preferable to have Korihor lose his soul than to let him continue to use his words to destroy others.

Alma 30:53 After Korihor acknowledged that he had been deceived, he said the reason he had followed the devil was because his teachings were pleasing to the carnal mind.

Alma 30:54-56, 58-59 Korihor was finally trampled to death by the Zoramites while begging for food. Think about why Mormon chose to include the account of Korihor in his abridgment of the plates and what you should learn from it.

Alma 30:60 This account teaches us that the devil will not support his children in the last day and that the fate of those who pervert the ways of the Lord is everlasting punishment.

Alma 31:12-23 Alma and his brethren learned about the Zoramites' manner of worship as they entered their synagogue and saw the prayers on the special tower. In addition to having a perverse form of worship, the Zoramites *"returned to their homes, never speaking of their God again until they had assembled themselves together again."*

Alma 31:19, 24 When they witnessed this false worship, Alma and his brethren were both greatly astonished and grieved.

Chapter 31 contains two prayers; one by the Zoramites and one by Alma. Think about the differences between the two prayers as you read them. Some of the main points of each prayer are listed:

Zoramites' Prayer

- God was, is, and always will be a spirit (Alma 31:15). *"We do not believe in the tradition of our brethren"* (Alma 31:16).
- *"There shall be no Christ"* (Alma 31:16).
- *"We shall be saved,...but everyone else will be ...cast ...to hell"* (Alma 31:17).
- Others are bound by *"foolish traditions"* (Alma 31:17).
- *"We are a chosen and a holy people"* (Alma 31:18).

Alma's Prayer

- *"Give me strength, that I may bear with mine infirmities"* (Alma 31:30).
- *"Wilt thou comfort my soul in Christ"* (Alma 31:31).
- *"Give unto me success, and also my fellow laborers"* (Alma 31:32).
- *"Wilt thou comfort [my fellow laborers'] souls in Christ"* (Alma 31:32).
- *"Help us bring the Zoramites 'unto thee'"* (Alma 31:34-35).
- *"[The Zoramites'] souls are precious"* (Alma 31:35).
- *"Give unto us ...power and wisdom"* (Alma 31:35).

As we examine these prayers carefully, we find that Alma's prayer differs from the Zoramites' prayer as we contrast the pride, selfishness, and unbelief of the Zoramites with Alma's humility, love for others, and faith.

Conclusion

President Ezra Taft Benson has often reminded us that all of the major Book of Mormon writers said they were writing for our day. Consequently, *"we should constantly ask ourselves, 'Why did the Lord inspire Mormon (or Moroni or Alma) to include that in his record? What lesson can I learn from that to help me live in this day and age?'"* (Ensign, Jan. 1992, p. 5.)

Brother LaMar Garrard wrote: *"As we compare the teachings of this man [Korihor] and the beliefs of those today who advocate the philosophy of naturalism, we see a striking similarity. I believe the Lord foresaw the adverse effects of naturalism on our modern world and therefore purposely directed Mormon to include the teachings of Korihor in his record. Those who read and accept the Book of Mormon are thereby warned against accepting the philosophical assumptions of naturalism. What one believes about the universe is important because it affects one's behavior, for 'as [a man] thinketh in his heart, so is he'."* (Studies in Scripture, 8:2)

The philosophies of Korihor and the Zoramites are prevalent today. From the classroom to the workplace, in the media, in books, and sometimes in the home, there are those who preach the false doctrines of Korihor to *"interrupt [our] rejoicings"* (Alma 30:22). Also, like the Zoramites, many today set their hearts on *"the vain things of the world"* (Alma 31:27). Fortify yourself through diligent study of the Book of Mormon, daily prayer, and continued obedience to the commandments of God.

Alma 31:24-29 The attitudes of the Zoramites were their greatest barriers to having faith in Christ as they were overcome with pride, vanity, and overwhelming worldiness.

Alma 15:17; Alma 34:38; D&C 59:21 Pride affects our worship as it drives away the Spirit, overcomes humility with vanity, and prevents us from being grateful to God for our blessings. Pride is an obstacle to salvation because it prevents us from humbling ourselves in obedience and it prevents us from hearing the still small voice of the Spirit as it seeks to guide us.

Alma 31:24, 34 Alma's *"heart was grieved"* because of the Zoramites' wickedness. He prayed earnestly that he and his brethren might bring them *"again unto...Christ"*.

3 Nephi 18:32 reminds us of the responsibility we have today to help those who have strayed from the teachings of Jesus Christ. We must continue to minister to them.

Alma 31:38 Alma and his brethren were blessed with temporal blessings, spiritual and temporal strength, and the companionship of the Spirit, so that they found joy in serving Christ. We know that the Lord will help us in similar ways if we pray in faith for that which is right.

Gospel Doctrine Notebook

Record your thoughts on discussion between Alma and Korihor.

- How does the Book of Mormon fortify you "against the evil designs, strategies, and doctrines of the devil"?