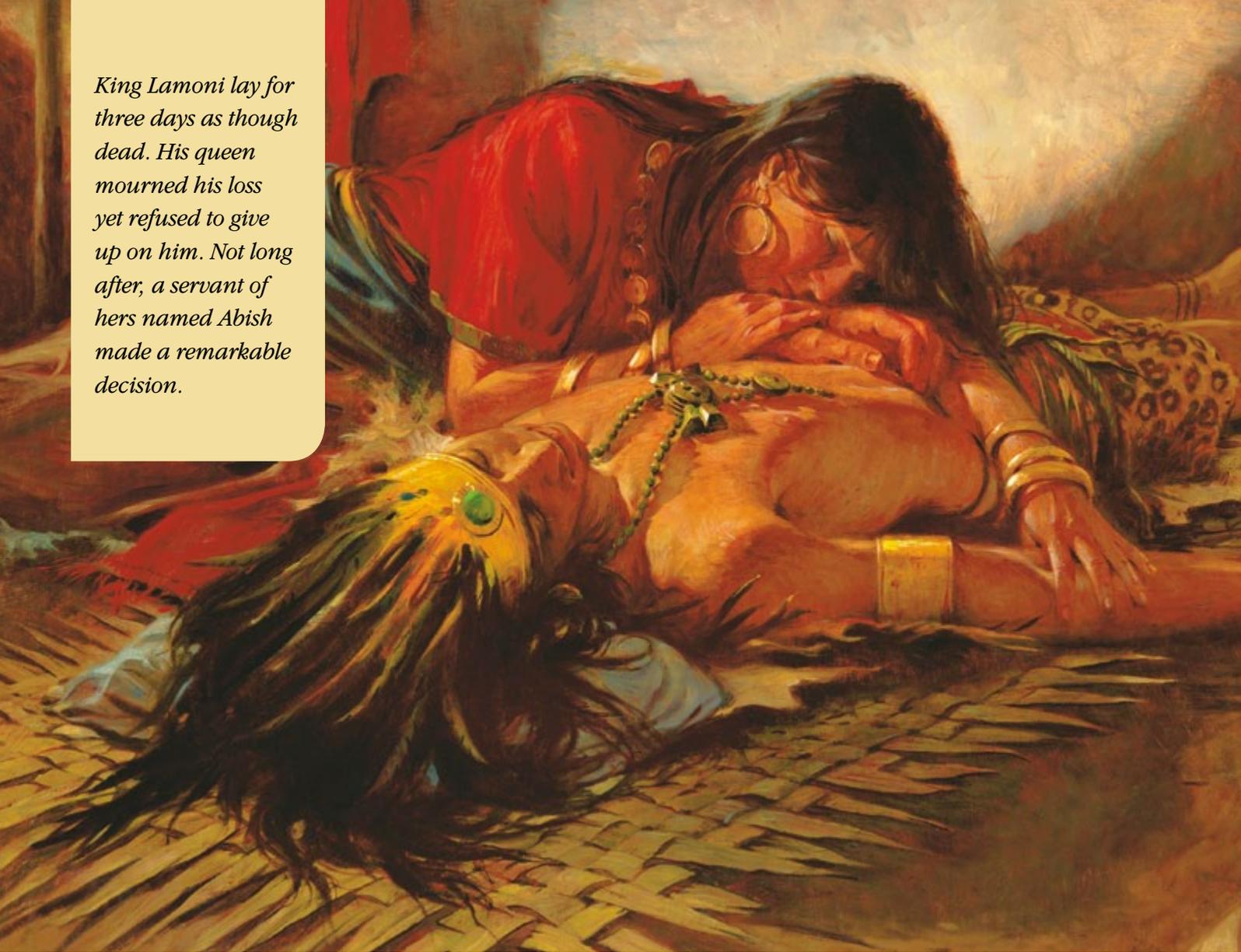


*King Lamoni lay for three days as though dead. His queen mourned his loss yet refused to give up on him. Not long after, a servant of hers named Abish made a remarkable decision.*



# Abish

A COMMON SERVANT,  
A TRUE TESTIMONY

*Having hidden her testimony for many years, Abish finally had her moment, and she did not hesitate. The result changed hundreds of lives.*

By Heather B. Moore

**W**e may never know the impact our testimony might have on other people. In fact, we may wonder sometimes if our testimony can make a difference. We might even say to ourselves, “Will it really matter if I say something? I am just one person—one voice.”

Yet each conversion, each testimony, each person’s path to God began with the testimony of someone else. That is exactly what happened in the life of the Lamanite servant woman Abish (see Alma 19). You and I may not have an experience that involves an entire kingdom as Abish did. Still, there will be times in each of our lives when we will be called upon to act based on what we believe. Such was the case for Abish.

### A Secret Conversion

Our story of Abish begins with the visit of the missionary Ammon, the Nephite son of King Mosiah, to the Lamanite people in the land of Ishmael (see Alma 17). But Abish’s full story began long before this. In fact, at the time Ammon arrived, she had already “been converted unto the Lord for many years, on account of a remarkable vision of her father” (Alma 19:16). Despite her testimony, Abish had kept her conversion to the gospel a secret because her people opposed teachings that were deemed to belong to their most bitter enemy, the Nephites. She was a mere servant to a queen in a society where the king held power over life and death. It is possible that had she made her conversion known, she would have been branded a traitor for supporting Nephite beliefs and punished with death.

Ammon’s arrival changed everything. After proving himself a faithful servant by defending the king’s flocks, he was permitted to teach the gospel directly to King Lamoni. The king was so moved by Ammon’s teachings and the promptings of the Holy Spirit that he offered a plea asking the Lord to show mercy on him and his people. Overcome with the Spirit, the king fell to the ground, unconscious (see Alma 18:41–42).

For three days the king lay as if dead, and for three days Abish listened to the rumors circulating in the court where

she was a servant to the queen. Remarkably, though many thought the king had died, the queen maintained hope that her husband was yet alive and did not send him to the family sepulchre.

And it appears that still, Abish did not reveal her conversion.

### An Open Witness

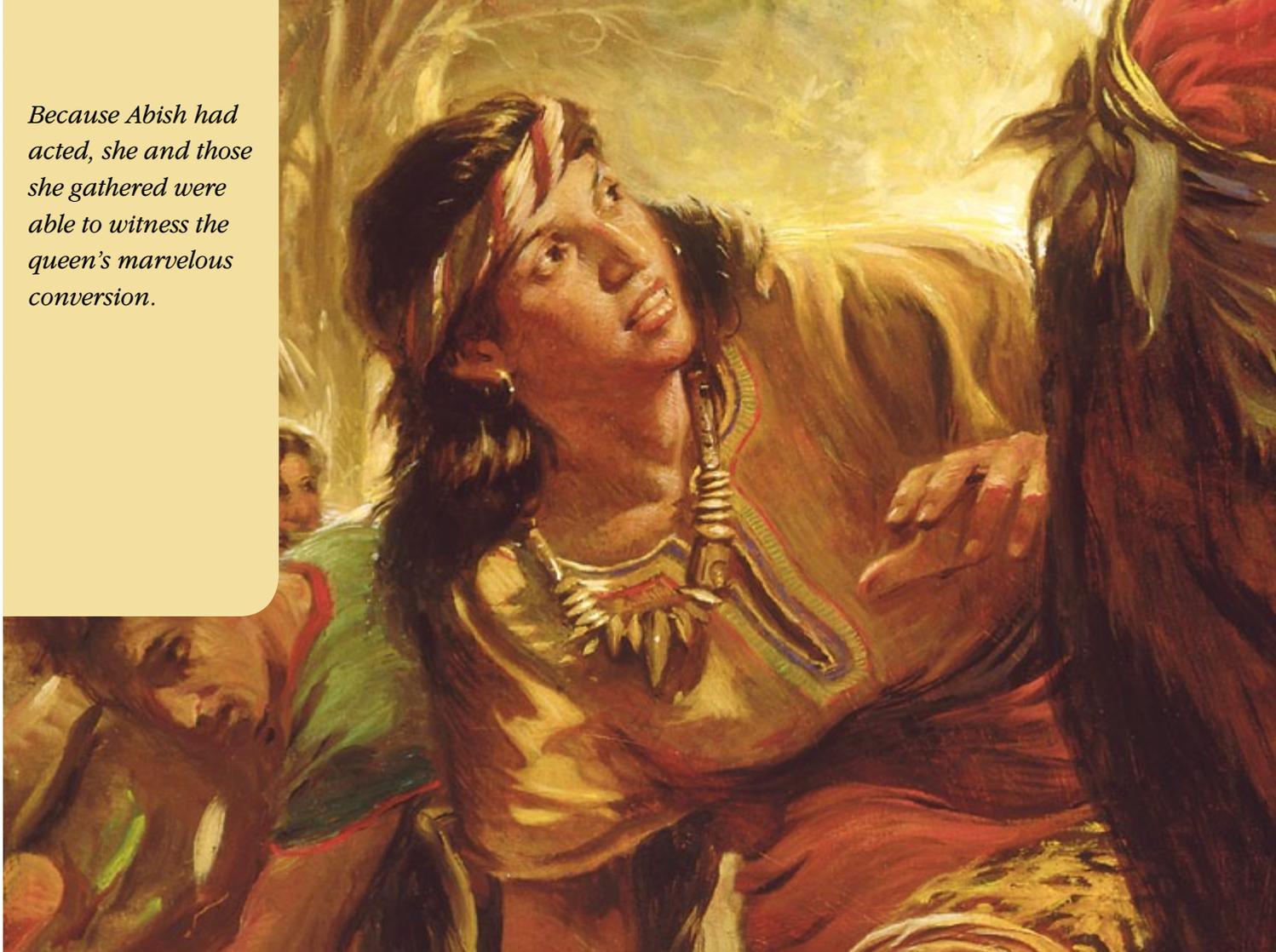
After three days, Lamoni recovered briefly and declared a witness of God so powerful that he was overcome “with joy; and the queen also sunk down, being overpowered by the Spirit.” Ammon, too, was soon overcome by the Spirit, as were the servants of the king, who had begun “to cry unto God” for mercy (Alma 19:13, 15). Although Abish was among the king’s household, she was not incapacitated by the Spirit. “When she saw that all the servants of Lamoni had fallen to the earth, and also her mistress, the queen, and the king, and Ammon lay prostrate upon the earth, she knew that it was the power of God” (Alma 19:17). This is a testimony in itself that Abish was familiar enough with the Spirit and receptive enough that she knew the truth of the situation—something that not everyone would see as she did, as we will soon discover.

Because of her previous conversion, Abish now held the position of being able to act without fear. Of all the members of the king’s house, only Abish had the ability to go among the people to inform them of what had happened to the king, queen, and their servants. The moment had come when she had to choose. Would she stand up for what she believed? Or would she remain quiet?

Taking courage that likely came through the power of the Spirit, “she ran forth from house to house, making it known unto the people.” She hoped that “by beholding this scene it would cause them to believe in the power of God” (Alma 19:17). A multitude came, “and to their astonishment, they beheld the king, and the queen, and their servants prostrate upon the earth, and they all lay there as though they were dead” (Alma 19:18).

However, not all of Lamoni’s people reacted well to what

*Because Abish had acted, she and those she gathered were able to witness the queen's marvelous conversion.*



they found, especially when they saw Ammon, who as a Nephite would naturally be considered an enemy, lying near the king. Some of them assumed a curse had struck the king and his household because Lamoni had allowed a Nephite into their land. Others believed the curse had come because Lamoni had slain his servants for not preventing his flocks from being scattered by the robbers at the Waters of Sebus. The disagreements escalated into arguments, and then into anger, until one of those present drew his sword to kill Ammon. Before the man could attack Ammon, the man was struck dead by the Lord (see Alma 19:19–22).

Fear descended upon the crowd. Some said Ammon “was a monster, who had been sent from the Nephites to torment them” (Alma 19:26). Others believed he “was sent by the Great Spirit to afflict them because of their iniquities.” As a result, “the contention began to be exceedingly sharp among them” (Alma 19:24–28).

At this point Abish returned to the house of the king.

One can imagine the confusion and sadness she must have felt when she witnessed the arguments and fear among the assembly. Perhaps she thought she was partly to blame for spreading the message far and wide. It is apparent from her reaction that she didn’t expect such outrage to occur. Viewing the discontented mass of people and the death of Ammon’s would-be attacker, Abish “was exceedingly sorrowful, even unto tears” (Alma 19:28).

Still, Abish knew the true cause of what had happened to the king and his household. She could have hidden herself away to avoid the fighting. Indeed, it would have been easy enough to simply sneak away, hope that her part was forgotten, and do nothing until the commotion died down, regardless of the consequences to the king, her mistress, or the others.

And yet, Abish chose to act. In the face of contention that already had led one man to lose his life, Abish boldly went to the queen’s side and took the unconscious

## OTHER LESSONS FROM ABISH'S STORY

**W**hat other lessons can we learn from Abish's experience? First, we can learn that the Lord doesn't favor a person based on his or her rank, demonstrating that He is "no respecter of persons" (D&C 1:35). No matter what walk of life we come from, each of us has the same privilege offered to us to receive a witness of the truth of the gospel.

Second, we can learn that even our one voice, like Abish's, can play an important role in the lives of others—whether they be common folk like Abish, or the very elite, like the king. Each of us has the capacity to share the gospel no matter our background.

Third, we can learn that the Lord works with those who are receptive. He sent visions to Abish's father, who was openhearted to the Lord's messages and shared them with his daughter. Thus she was spiritually prepared when Ammon came to preach to the Lamanites. Likewise, when Abish gathered the people, many of them were prepared. There are people waiting for us to be brave like Abish, people who will be receptive to the gospel if we will but open our mouths and act.

woman's hand—an act that certainly drew attention from the crowd. At Abish's touch, the queen rose to her feet and "clasped her hands, being filled with joy, speaking many words which were not understood" (Alma 19:30).

The queen then took the king by his hand. King Lamoni stood and, "seeing the contention among his people, went forth and began to rebuke them and to teach them the words which he had heard from the mouth of Ammon" (Alma 19:31). Not everyone wanted to hear Lamoni's adamant testimony, despite the tangible presence of the Spirit and the many fervent testimonies borne that day. "There were many among them who would not hear [Lamoni's] words; therefore they went their way" (Alma 19:32).

Still, many others did open their hearts and listen to Lamoni and the queen, nurturing a seed that Abish had so recently planted. "As many as heard his words believed, and were converted unto the Lord" (Alma 19:31). When Ammon and the king's servants arose, they too began to preach. "And it came to pass that there were many that did believe in their words; and as many as did believe were baptized; and they became a righteous people, and they did establish a church among them" (Alma 19:35).

### A Lasting Influence

Although we read nothing more about Abish from this point onward, the events that included Abish's courageous actions form a turning point in the Book of Mormon—a vital transformation in the history of her people. Her

one-voice role, in conjunction with the missionary work of Ammon, played a critical part in thousands of Lamanites' lives as they were "brought to the knowledge of the Lord" (Alma 23:5).

As a Lamanite servant, she was the one who gathered her people to the king's house so they could witness the conversion of their king and queen. Through her actions, a large crowd of Lamanites was taught by the king, the queen, Ammon, and the servants, and was eventually converted. The courageous actions of a common servant—someone like many of those who had come

to see what the commotion was all about—combined with the testimonies of others, changed many lives in ways that can be measured only in eternity.

More than a century later, the Savior Himself explained how a servant could have such a great influence: "For he that is least among you all, the same shall be great" (Luke 9:48). Like Abish, we are servants in our Father's kingdom, and our testimonies do make a difference. When we have the courage to stand as a witness, we may not realize what an impact our single testimony may have on another.

Although Abish lived in a repressive society, she enjoyed the blessing of the Spirit in her private life. Remarkably, she was able to retain her faith in a hostile environment. Only when Ammon, a Nephite, came into her land was she finally able to act on what she knew and what she had been taught; and as a consequence, she became an unforgettable witness. If we prepare ourselves, like Abish, we will become true servants of the Lord, ready to accept the divine charge when He calls upon us to be His witnesses. ■