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The Rameumptom represents the method of prayer used by the Zoramite people in the Book of Mormon. Their religion was a version of worship derived from the Nephite people, and their form of Christian worship. Let's take a look at how they worshiped, and compare it to what Alma, the prophet, was teaching. This article focuses specifically on their form of prayer.

What Zoram created

Here is the account of where the Zoramites came from and why they were the way they were. It is found in Alma 31:1.

> 1 Now it came to pass that after the end of Korihor, Alma having received tidings that the Zoramites were perverting the ways of the Lord, and that Zoram, who was their leader, was leading the hearts of the people to bow down to dumb idols, his heart again began to sicken because of the iniquity of the people.

Here are a couple of points about verse one. Zoram had led away many people, not just a handful of families, and many of these families were very wealthy. They felt they

could not worship the way he wanted them to worship in the Nephite cities, so they separated themselves from the body of Nephites and moved into their own land that bordered on the lands with the Lamanites. It took a while before Alma even heard about this movement. He had been dealing with the people over in Ammonihah, and had just finished dealing with the great war with the Lamanites.

This mission Alma embarks on to go and reconvert the Zoramites is Alma the Younger's last mission. After this experience that goes through Alma 35, we will read some filler information on the Nephite people and about some letters Alma sent to his sons that goes through Alma 45, at which point Alma blesses his sons, his people, the earth, then heads out to go toward the city of Melek, and is never heard from again. It is assumed by Mormon that Alma was translated. So this mission was Alma's last great attempt to bring the remainder of his people to Christ.

Alma faced the same problem with the Nephites that the early Apostles faced with the Savior's Church. There were great distances and slow communication to wrestle with that allowed dissenters to enter the church and lead away the people faster than they could plug the holes in the proverbial dam. He had been concerned about the people of Ammonihah plotting the overthrow of the Nephite people, while all along the Zoramites were headed down that same road.

The mission begins

When the missionaries arrived in the land of the Zoramites they quickly made their way to their places of worship. What they found astounded them, for they had never witnessed anything like this before. Here is the introduction to the Zoramites in Alma 31:8-11.

> 8 Now the Zoramites were dissenters from the Nephites; therefore they had had the word of God preached unto them.
>
> 9 But they had fallen into great errors, for they would not observe to keep the commandments of God, and his statutes, according to the law of Moses.
>
> 10 Neither would they observe the performances of the church, to continue in prayer and supplication to God daily, that they might not enter into temptation.
>
> 11 Yea, in fine, they did pervert the ways of the Lord in very many instances; therefore, for this cause, Alma and his brethren went into the land to preach the word unto them.

It was what they found that so surprised these missionaries, for no one had ever witnessed this form of worship before.

> 12 Now, when they had come into the land, behold, to their astonishment they found that the Zoramites had built synagogues, and that they did gather themselves together on one day of the week, which day they did call the day of the Lord; and they did worship after a manner which Alma and his brethren had never beheld;
>
> 13 For they had a place built up in the center of their synagogue, a place for standing, which was high above the head; and the top thereof would only admit one person.
>
> 14 Therefore, whosoever desired to worship must go forth and stand upon the top thereof, and stretch forth his hands towards heaven, and cry with a loud voice, saying:

This "place for standing" was called, by them, the Rameumptom, which means the holy stand. Each person had to individually go and stand in front of the eyes of the whole assemblage to declare their faith publicly. Let's look at what kinds of things they included in their declarations. I seriously doubt that each person had to give what the following verses tell us from their memory. That would take way too long. But what Mormon has included here makes for a good summary of most of their doctrine (Alma 31:15-18).

> 15 Holy, holy God; we believe that thou art God, and we believe that thou art holy, and that thou wast a spirit, and that thou art a spirit, and that thou wilt be a spirit forever.
>
> 16 Holy God, we believe that thou hast separated us from our brethren; and we do not believe in the tradition of our brethren, which was handed down to them by the childishness of their fathers; but we believe that thou hast elected us to be thy holy children; and also thou hast made it known unto us that there shall be no Christ.
>
> 17 But thou art the same yesterday, today, and forever; and thou hast elected us that we shall be saved, whilst all around us are elected to be cast by thy wrath down to hell; for the which holiness, O God, we thank thee; and we also thank thee that thou hast elected us, that we may not be led away after the foolish traditions of our brethren, which doth bind them down to a belief of Christ, which doth lead their hearts to wander far from thee, our God.
>
> 18 And again we thank thee, O God, that we are a chosen and a holy people. Amen.

Review of their doctrine

Alma 31:15-18 contain some interesting doctrine. Here is a short list.

- God is a spirit. Always has been and always will be.
- The Zoramites were separated from the Nephites because they are a chosen people.
- The religious traditions of the Nephites were "handed down to them by the childishness of their fathers."
- As a chosen people, the Zoramites are holy.
- There will never be a Christ.
- Only the Zoramites will be saved. Everyone else will go to hell.
- The Nephite belief in a Christ binds them down and causes their hearts to wander far from God.
- The Zoramites were grateful to be the chosen and only holy people before God.

Wow. That is quite the list of doctrinal points in just four verses.

What did Zoram teach his people to believe about themselves?

What the Zoramites taught and practices was so wrong on many levels. The Nephites had never experienced anything like it before. The Zoramites had been taught that prayer only had to happen once a week, but it had to be done in a prescribed manner. To not be allowed to pray in this manner put you in the same position as the Nephites - on the high road to hell. In Alma 32 when Alma teaches the poor class among the Zoramites about faith, we find that it was their own priests who threw them out of the synagogues. Why? Because their clothing wasn't good enough to allow them to mingle among the wealthier worshipers.

Did you notice that what was taught was sort of in the vein of anti doctrine? They didn't seem to have so much doctrine to teach as they did to teach against the Nephites. They were blessed and saved by God mainly because God had rejected the Nephites and had saved them. The Nephites were believing false doctrines, so they were justifiably proud that their doctrine was correct. Believing in Christ bound down the hearts of the Nephites to believe false things, while they were free because they did not believe in such childish traditions. All their doctrines seem to have been based on a rejection of everything the Nephites stood for.

This list of beliefs reminds me of one of my mission experiences. My wife and I both served in California. I was in the Bay Area, and she was in Los Angeles at the same

Celebrate the bicentennial of the Restoration with a throw pillow. "Oh how lovely was that morning." The dates 1820-2020 are watermarked into the tree.

time. Both of us had ample experience with a born again group whose main focus was preaching against the "Mormons." When I would ask someone who belonged to this church what they believed in, the only doctrine anyone could come up with was the doctrine that would send all the Mormons to hell. Every week it was the same set of sermons about how wrong those Mormons were. Neither my wife, nor I ever could find anyone who could talk about what they actually believed that went beyond their belief that we were going to hell. This makes the teachings of the Zoramites sound vaguely familiar, but just as confusing.

Zoramite prayer

The form of prayer engaged in by the Zoramites was very focused on self. It started with the presentation of the prayer, the Rameumptom. They had to be alone and in front of all their peers. It kind of reminds one of Jesus talking about the prayers of the Pharisees given on the street corners to be seen of men. They only prayed for themself. They gloried in themselves and their special and holy position before the Lord.

At no time did the person praying ever ask anything of God. They also never discussed anything of a personal nature. No requests were ever made, nor was there ever an attempt to seek for understanding. They seemed to have all the answers they needed in life, and all that was required of them was to proclaim their sacred position before God before their own community to be accepted by God.

The Zoramite prayer was an extension of their worship. They had to be dressed in all their best finery to even be allowed into the synagogue. So when it was their turn on the Rameumptom, all around them could witness their "worthiness" through their finery. Praying as a Zoramite was a package deal. You received acceptance from both God and community in the deal, and were able to go home feeling good about yourself. After all, you just declared yourself to be holy and better than others in your church service in front of everyone.

Alma's prayer

Now here is a mystery for you. Who records the words of a prophet's personal prayers? I will probably never know in this life. Before I get to Alma's prayer, let's look at what he learned from observing these people worship God (Alma 31:23-25).

> 23 Now, after the people had all offered up thanks after this manner, they returned to their homes, never speaking of their God again until they had assembled themselves together again to the holy stand, to offer up thanks after their manner.
>
> 24 Now when Alma saw this his heart was grieved; for he saw that they were a wicked and a perverse people; yea, he saw that their hearts were set upon gold, and upon silver, and upon all manner of fine goods.
>
> 25 Yea, and he also saw that their hearts were lifted up unto great boasting, in their pride.

These people had forgotten how to pray effectively. They went an entire week without trying to personally connect with God. And when they did pray, it was after a strictly prescribed and public method, thus preventing any sort of intimacy in their one prayer for the week.

Here is the first part of Alma's personal prayer (Alma 31:26-29).

> 26 And he lifted up his voice to heaven, and cried, saying: O, how long, O Lord, wilt thou suffer that thy servants shall dwell here below in the flesh, to behold such gross wickedness among the children of men?
>
> 27 Behold, O God, they cry unto thee, and yet their hearts are swallowed up in their pride. Behold, O God, they cry unto thee with their mouths, while they are puffed up, even to greatness, with the vain things of the world.
>
> 28 Behold, O my God, their costly apparel, and their ringlets, and their bracelets, and their ornaments of gold, and all their precious things which they are ornamented with; and behold, their hearts are set upon them, and yet they cry unto thee and say—We thank thee, O God, for we are a chosen people unto thee, while others shall perish.
>
> 29 Yea, and they say that thou hast made it known unto them that there shall be no Christ.

Alma poured out his heart to the Lord. He rehearsed what he had found among the people, giving the Lord a report of where the people stood spiritually. He described not only their method of prayer, but what their practices represented - their love of their riches and the things of this world. He also did not fail to recognize that while they were

entirely engrossed in their worldly worship, they still acted as though they were the chosen ones.

As Alma continued to pray, he admitted his weaknesses before the Lord and asked for strength to bear up well under the adversities of this experience. He also prays for comfort in Christ because of the iniquity of the people (Alma 31:30-35).

> 30 O Lord God, how long wilt thou suffer that such wickedness and infidelity shall be among this people? O Lord, wilt thou give me strength, that I may bear with mine infirmities. For I am infirm, and such wickedness among this people doth pain my soul.
>
> 31 O Lord, my heart is exceedingly sorrowful; wilt thou comfort my soul in Christ. O Lord, wilt thou grant unto me that I may have strength, that I may suffer with patience these afflictions which shall come upon me, because of the iniquity of this people.
>
> 32 O Lord, wilt thou comfort my soul, and give unto me success, and also my fellow laborers who are with me—yea, Ammon, and Aaron, and Omner, and also Amulek and Zeezrom, and also my two sons—yea, even all these wilt thou comfort, O Lord. Yea, wilt thou comfort their souls in Christ.
>
> 33 Wilt thou grant unto them that they may have strength, that they may bear their afflictions which shall come upon them because of the iniquities of this people.
>
> 34 O Lord, wilt thou grant unto us that we may have success in bringing them again unto thee in Christ.
>
> 35 Behold, O Lord, their souls are precious, and many of them are our brethren; therefore, give unto us, O Lord, power and wisdom that we may bring these, our brethren, again unto thee.

A key difference in how Alma prayed and how the Zoramites prayed is that Alma (verse 35) specifically states that he recognizes the worth of these "precious" souls. He knows that many of these people are his brethren, and he wants to bring them back to Christ.

The differences

But wait, where was Alma's focus? Yes, he talks to the Lord about his personal pain, and he asks God to help him bear with patience the difficulties he knew he would face in trying to reclaim the Zoramites. But the focus of his prayer was mainly on those who needed saving. Others. He prayed for his fellow missionaries as well. The Zoramites, on

the other hand, were completely focused on self, convenience, public spectacle, and reputation. They were engulfed in the things of this world.

Let others know you are available to help with an I Minister mug. No words needed.

Let's bring this home, shall we? When we pray, where is our attention? Are we seeking for ways to serve our neighbors? Do we acknowledge our difficulties, but ask not that they be taken from us, but instead that we have the strength to rise to their challenges? Are we seeking the welfare of the souls of others, praying to forgive those who have injured us or taken advantage of us? What is our attitude about our standing with God? Do we assume we are special in some way, and favored above those who haven't been as richly blessed as we have been, or do we seek that all those around us might see us and think of Christ, because we are striving so hard to emulate Christ's teachings in our life?

How many prayers do we offer where we are focused on complaining that we are not being treated right by someone, that we are having a tough time, and we want the Lord to smooth the way before us? How many times do we talk of others, by name, in our prayers, or are our prayers wholly about us? Do we talk about our possessions or lack of enough possessions? Do we focus on what we want instead of what other need?

The Zoramites worshiped their silver and their gold, and all their precious things. That is where their hearts were. Do you have a spiritual Rameumptom in your heart? If so, what color is it, silver or gold? Let's hope that our personal prayers are focused on others, instead of on ourselves.

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What Color Is Your Rameumptom?