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## Chapter II

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**Abstract:** True and False Prophets—Lehi's Vision—He Warns the People—They Persecute and Try to Kill Him—Commanded in a Dream to Take His Family into the Wilderness—Came to Red Sea—Camped near it—Built an Altar and Made Offering to the Lord—Laman and Lemuel—Their Unbelief—Shaken and Confounded Before their Father

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—Zenock, Neum and Zenos—except the quotations from them which appear in the Book of Mormon. Their predictions and the predictions of another prophet—of which none have yet come to us—Ezais by name, as well as those of Moses, Joseph, Isaiah, and all the prophets from the beginning down to his own day, they brought with them upon plates of brass to this land. Nephi, in speaking of the prophecies of Isaiah, from which he quoted largely, says that the Jews understood the things of the prophets spoken unto them as no other people not taught after their manner could. That he was trained in these things at Jerusalem is easily perceived from what he says; for he understood their style, and their predictions were plain to him. This was an advantage to him afterwards in teaching his people.

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## CHAPTER II.

TRUE AND FALSE PROPHETS—LEHI'S VISION—HE WARNS THE PEOPLE—THEY PERSECUTE AND TRY TO KILL HIM—COMMANDED IN A DREAM TO TAKE HIS FAMILY INTO THE WILDERNESS—CAME TO RED SEA—CAMPED NEAR IT—BUILT AN ALTAR AND MADE OFFERING TO THE LORD—LAMAN AND LEMUEL—THEIR UNBELIEF—SHAKEN AND CONFOUNDED BEFORE THEIR FATHER.

**I**N the beginning of the first year of Zedekiah's reign there were many prophets in Jerusalem. The events connected with the recent siege of that city were of such a character as to arouse thought and prompt men who feared God to feel after Him. We learn from another source than Nephi's record that there were many false prophets at those times who misled the people and were the means of causing them to harden their hearts against the truth. The prophets of God told the people of Jerusalem they must repent, or that great city must be destroyed. These predictions had their proper effect upon Lehi. He undoubtedly believed them, and he went out and called upon the Lord with all his heart in behalf of his people. While pray-

ing there came a pillar of fire and rested upon a rock before him. We are told by Nephi that he saw and heard much, which caused him to quake and tremble exceedingly. After this he returned to his house, and being overcome by the Spirit and the things which he had seen he was carried away in a vision. He saw the heavens open, and he thought he saw God sitting upon a throne, surrounded by numberless concourses of angels in the attitude of singing and praising Him. He saw one descending out of heaven, whose lustre was above that of the sun at noon day. He was followed by twelve others, whose brightness exceeded that of the stars. They all came down and went forth upon the face of the earth. The first, however, came and stood before Lehi and gave him a book, and told him to read. As he read he was filled with the Spirit of God. And he read, "Wo, wo unto Jerusalem; for I have seen thy abominations." He read many things concerning Jerusalem, that it should be destroyed, and that many of its inhabitants should perish by the sword, and that many should be carried away captive into Babylon. He read and saw many marvelous things, which caused him to praise the Lord in the following language: "Great and marvelous are thy works, O Lord God Almighty! Thy throne is high in the heavens and thy power and goodness, and mercy are over all the inhabitants of the earth; and because thou art merciful, thou wilt not suffer those who come unto thee that they shall perish!" The soul of Lehi rejoiced and his whole heart was filled, because of the things which the Lord had shown him.

This is the feeling which every one has to whom the Lord reveals Himself as He did to Lehi. There is a pure and heavenly joy rests upon him that language cannot describe or express, and in the presence of which the afflictions which he has to endure, because of the persecutions of men, appear trifling and are easily borne. Having had these visions Lehi could not rest without warning his neighbors and the people of the city. He described to them their wickedness and abominations, and testified that the things which he had seen and heard, and also that which he had read in the book, manifested plainly of the coming of a Messiah and also the redemption of the world. To tell wicked people of their sins and of the

destruction of their government or city makes them angry. It wounds their self-love; it insults their personal and national pride, and it scarcely ever fails to arouse their hatred. There was an exception to this which occurs to us. Upon one occasion the wickedness of the people of Nineveh, the Lord said, had come up to Him. He sent the Prophet Jonah to warn them, and they believed God; and from the king on his throne to the lowest in the city, including all their animals, they wore sackcloth, and fasted. They turned every one from his evil way, and from the violence that was in his hands, and cried mightily unto the Lord. Their repentance was pleasing unto the Lord, and He turned from them the judgment he had threatened. Unfortunately for the people of Jerusalem, they did not have that spirit. Their hearts were hard. They would not believe Lehi; but they mocked him, grew angry with him, just as they had with other prophets before him whom they had cast out, stoned and slain, and they tried to kill him. Had he remained among them, and continued his prophesying, they doubtless would have killed him. But the Lord had chosen him for another work, and he escaped from their plots. The Lord spoke unto him in a dream, and after blessing him for what he had done, in faithfully declaring unto the Jews that which He had commanded him—for doing which they had sought to take his life—He commanded him that he should take his family and depart into the wilderness.

Lehi's family consisted at that time of his wife Sariah and four sons—Laman, Lemuel, Sam and Nephi—that we know of. Nephi, some years after this (*II. Nephi viii.*, 6) speaks of his sisters. He does not mention them as members of the family at the time of leaving Jerusalem, and we are left to conjecture whether they were born before leaving Jerusalem or afterwards.

Lehi did not hesitate about obeying the commandment. It was probably a matter of life or death with him. He had either to leave, or be killed if he continued to prophesy. Hence it was that among his descendants the expression was used, "Our father, Lehi, was driven out of Jerusalem." (*Helaman viii.*, 22.) Nephi himself, in speaking of the people of that city said: "They have driven him out of the land." Lehi did not load himself down with his gold and silver and other valuables

these he left with his house and land. He took his family, his provisions and tents, and started. After traveling in the wilderness he came to the Red Sea, and he continued his journey near its borders. He soon reached a valley by the side and near the mouth of a river, which emptied into the Red Sea. Here he pitched his tent, and the family remained encamped sometime. He built at this place an altar of stones and made an offering unto the Lord and gave Him thanks. The river he called Laman, the name of his oldest son; the valley he called Lemuel, the name of his second son. Up to this point we are told nothing of the character of Lehi's family. But Nephi tells us that after stopping at this river and in this valley and giving to them these names, his father took occasion to say to Laman:

“O that thou mightest be like unto this river, continually running into the fountain of all righteousness.”

And to say to Lemuel:

“O that thou mightest be like unto this valley, firm and steadfast, and immoveable in keeping the commandments of the Lord.”

Nephi gives the reasons why his father talked in this way to his two oldest sons. They were young men who had no faith in the things which their father had taught. They had the same spirit of unbelief which the Jews had who sought to kill their father. They called him a visionary man, and they murmured against him because he had taken them away from Jerusalem, from the land of their inheritance, and their gold and silver and other precious things and led them into the wilderness. They did not believe that Jerusalem could be destroyed as the prophets had predicted. Before we get through with this life of Nephi we shall have occasion to dwell more at length upon their spirit and conduct. But upon this occasion Lehi became aroused. He was filled with the Spirit of the Lord to such an extent, and spoke unto them with such power, that their frames shook before him, and they were so confounded they dare not say anything against him; but they did as he commanded them.