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## Chapter XI

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**Abstract:** How Did They Travel?—Had They Vehicles?—Children of Israel used Covered Wagons—Did Lehi and Company use Camels?—Experience of Battalion in California—Custom in Abyssinia—Laman and Companions Never Forget Habits Acquired in the Desert—Transmitted Them to Posterity in Their New Home—Nephi Cherished True Knowledge of Civilization—Contrast Between the Two Brothers—Each Left his Impress upon his Nation

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## CHAPTER XI.

HOW DID THEY TRAVEL?—HAD THEY VEHICLES?—CHILDREN OF ISRAEL USED COVERED WAGONS—DID LEHI AND COMPANY USE CAMELS?—EXPERIENCE OF BATTALION IN CALIFORNIA—CUSTOM IN ABYSSINIA—LAMAN AND COMPANIONS NEVER FORGOT HABITS ACQUIRED IN THE DESERT—TRANSMITTED THEM TO POSTERITY IN THEIR NEW HOME—NEPHI CHERISHED TRUE KNOWLEDGE OF CIVILIZATION—CONTRAST BETWEEN THE TWO BROTHERS—EACH LEFT HIS IMPRESS UPON HIS NATION.

THERE is nothing said in the record which has come to us respecting the method of traveling adopted by Lehi and his company in the wilderness—whether they had beasts of burden or conveyances of any kind, or not. That they did not go afoot and carry upon their own backs that which they had with them, is so plain, we think, that no one who reflects upon the subject will entertain such an idea. In the first place we learn that Lehi took no gold, silver, or other valuables with him when he left Jerusalem, but he did take provisions and tents. When his sons returned to Jerusalem to obtain the plates they took with them their tents. In that climate a tent at least was necessary for a covering. They certainly had some means of carrying these provisions and tents. While they were in the valley of Lemuel they gathered together seeds of grain and fruit of every kind. When they left there they took these with them, and they carried them with them during all their wanderings; they also took with them “all the remainder of our [their] provisions which the Lord had given unto” them, and their tents. Besides these, they took “whatsoever things we [they] should carry into the wilderness.” These would comprise their clothing, their weapons of the chase, and other necessary articles. We think it is safe also to suppose that, while they killed game by the way as they traveled, they also accumulated a stock for future use when they stopped, as they often did, to rest and to hunt. We scarcely think

they used vehicles for the purpose of transporting all these articles. The character of the country would be unsuitable for their use; though their forefathers, when they traveled in the wilderness between the Red Sea and Canaan had wagons with them and they used oxen to draw them.

We think that the popular impression is that the children of Israel upon their journey to the promised land of Canaan knew nothing about wagons and had no use for them. But the fact is, they traveled in heavy marching order. They had their wives, children, effects, and indeed all their worldly possessions with them. Upon one occasion the princes of Israel, each a representative of one of the tribes, brought an offering of six covered wagons and twelve oxen and gave them to Moses. That is they each gave an ox and half a wagon. These were given to the Levites for their use (*Numbers vii.*, 2-9). In the country which Lehi and his company were traveling it was then the fashion, as it has been through all the intervening centuries and still is, to use animals for carrying burdens. The camel, "the ship of the desert," as he has been aptly called, has proved of inestimable value for this purpose to the inhabitants of the Arabian peninsula. Horses and asses attain their greatest excellence in that land; they are, however, more employed for riding than for loads. But the camel would be of as great use to Lehi and his fellow-travelers as it was and is to the Arabs. He and his sons must have known of its value and its adaptability for the purposes they needed. We think it very likely, therefore, that they used camels to carry their baggage, and probably their wives and children and themselves. Travelers inform us that in pasture land Arabia is singularly fortunate, and that the very desert supplies through the greater part of its extent sufficient browse for camels.

Our views upon this point are sustained, we think, by the experience of the Latter-day Saints in the mountains. When they left Winter Quarters, their experience in traveling was confined to the methods to which they had been accustomed; but when those who had been in the Battalion and discharged in California came to Salt Lake Valley, they brought with them their baggage and provisions packed on horses and mules—a method of traveling well suited to the country over which

they journeyed, and which they, with ready facility, had adopted from the people of the land, the Californians. This style of traveling has ever since been common in our land. Its adoption by the members of the Battalion was, under the circumstances, a most sensible thing; and had the same men been placed in Arabia, and had seen or known anything about the camel and his wonderful fitness for all the purposes of traveling in that land, they would have used it with the same readiness as they did the pack animals of California.

Referring again to the journey of the children of Israel in the wilderness, the difficulty of providing water for their numerous cattle has proved a great stumbling-block to many people, especially to those inclined to doubt the truth of the sacred record. A suggestion has been made upon this point (Palmer's *Desert of the Exodus*, p. 272) that reduces this stumbling-block considerably. Instead of cattle being an encumbrance to the movements of the host, they could have been used as beasts of burden. In addition to the camp furniture, each could carry its own supply of water, sufficient for several days, in water-skins slung at its sides, precisely as Sir Samuel Baker, an English traveler, found them doing at the present day in Abyssinia. Those who have traveled on our own deserts know how common an occurrence it has been to carry water, not in water-skins, but in kegs slung upon the sides of pack animals. Though cattle could have been used in this manner by Lehi and party, the country through which they traveled was not so favorable for pasturage for them. But the camel was at home there. He could live upon scanty herbage; he could travel for days without water. From his hair they could make tents and clothing, and in every respect he was a better animal for their use than the ox.

In the matter of clothing, they doubtless learned to be very simple. The climate was one which required but little. Travelers describe the dress of the wandering Arabs of the present day as consisting, on the part of the men, of a long cotton shirt, open at the breast, and often girt with a leathern girdle. A cloak of hair is sometimes thrown over the shoulders. A handkerchief, folded but once, covers the head, round which it is kept in its place by a piece of twine or twisted hairband.

To this costume a pair of open sandals is added. Among the Bedouins of the south a light wrapper takes the place of the handkerchief on the head, and a loin-cloth that of the shirt. The attire of the women is hardly more complicated. It is worthy of remark in this connection that the wicked portion of Lehi's descendants never forgot or threw off the habits of life which they had adopted in the wilderness. When they reached the promised land, the continent of South America, if they pursued agriculture at all it was only for a short time. At Lehi's death, if not before, they resumed their old nomadic habits. They had been a wandering tribe of people for eight years in the Arabian peninsula, hunting for game and living upon the spoils of the chase, removed from all the arts of civilization, and it would seem they had become attached to that kind of life. The diet, too, appears to have suited them; for Enos, one of Lehi's grandsons, describes them as early as his day, as a wild, ferocious, blood-thirsty people; full of idolatry and filthiness; feeding upon beasts of prey, and many of them *living upon raw meat*. They lived in tents and wandered about in the wilderness. Their dress consisted of a short skin girdle about their loins, and they shaved their heads. They had become an idle, subtle and mischievous people immediately after landing in the promised land. From being an enlightened, cultivated people, familiar with the arts of life and the knowledge of their race—and the Jewish people of that day still occupied in many respects the foremost rank among the nations—through rejecting the commandments of the Lord, closing their hearts against the Holy Spirit, and indulging in a spirit of murderous hatred against their father and brother, because they chose to serve the Lord, they sank into barbarism, lower even than the Bedouins of the desert in which they had wandered.

Nephi and those who sought for the Spirit of the Lord did not forget, in the midst of the hard life and privations of the wilderness, their former good habits, or throw aside their knowledge of civilization. Their wandering life did not degrade them. Though they had to hunt for the game necessary to sustain them, and, by direction of the Lord, eat its flesh without cooking it, and live in tents, they looked upon that mode

of life, not as one that they must follow for ever after, but as necessary only in the providence of the Lord for the time being. Therefore, when they reached the promised land, they became an agricultural and pastoral people of settled habits, living no longer in tents and wandering to and fro, but building houses, establishing cities and turning their attention to mechanism and manufactures and the cultivation of all the arts of true civilization. Of course two branches of a family adopting such dissimilar habits and modes of life would inevitably separate. They would have nothing in common except their origin, and the influence of that would not long remain. The future lives and histories of these two peoples furnish us the most wonderful illustration of the effects of individual example and teachings that we know anything about. Nephi on the one hand and Laman on the other, for good or evil, was each the head and representative man of his family and people. They both had passed through the same outward circumstances. For a wise purpose the Lord had caused them to follow a wandering, and it may be said a wild desert life of eight years. The one had emerged from it stronger, purer, more elevated in thought and action, more attached to those pursuits which make men and nations enlightened, noble and powerful, and more determined when the proper time came to follow them. The other emerged from it a savage in thought, sentiment and practice. He had stifled those human and loving feelings which always exist in the bosoms of men and women who cherish the Spirit of the Lord, and a ferocious, murderous disposition had taken their place. The wild, barbarous life of the desert, with its animal pleasures and excitements of hunting and roving from place to place, with its idleness and filthiness, he became satisfied with, and he never forsook it. He and those who joined him would not have sunk as low as they did had they not been favored, as they had been, in their birth, their surroundings and their opportunities. There was no blessing, favor or power which was possible for man to obtain from the Lord that was not within the reach of Laman, if he had chosen to seek for it. Instead of this, he deliberately, despite every warning, even the words and presence of an angel and the voice of the Lord Himself, rejected everything of the

kind and opened his heart to the spirit of hatred and murder. That he did not kill his father and brother was not because of any compunction or lack of effort upon his part. More open and flagrant rebellion against the Lord and everything proceeding from Him, history does not furnish us. Hence his deep fall and the curse which came upon his race. His people and descendants were like him. His wife, children, and all who came within the range of his influence and example, and whom he could persuade, he dragged down with himself. When he died, he bequeathed to his posterity a legacy of unextinguishable hate against everything elevated, noble and good. He chose to be a savage himself, he made his wife and people and descendants savages also. This was Laman, and this the effect of his life, as we glean it from the record embodied in the Book of Mormon.

How great a contrast between his life and that of Nephi! One can scarcely conceive how it would be possible for two men of one family, of the same parentage and brought up under the same circumstances to be more dissimilar. Nephi's constant effort was to lift his people up and to have them exert every power to attain the highest standard of excellence. His example, teachings and labors left an impression upon his people for good, the effect of which was felt for centuries. Still further it can be said with the greatest propriety, that by the revelation of his record, and its translation by the Prophet Joseph, the influence of his teachings and life still operates, and in the years to come will yet exert a mighty power upon the mixed descendants of himself and brothers.

The influence of Laman's life was as potent for evil as Nephi's was for good. We can trace its effects through the ages, widening and deepening as generations came and passed away, casting its baleful shadow upon all who came within its range. No mortal pen can describe the bloodshed, and carnage, and misery which have been the results of his teachings. He imbibed the spirit of falsehood in the outset. He never appears to have done justice to the views and aims of his father and brother. He tortured their teachings and acts, designed for the benefit and happiness of himself and all the company, into causes sufficiently atrocious to justify him in taking their

lives. This conception of their characters and motives—and especially so with respect to Nephi—he gave to all who accompanied him. It was indelibly fastened upon the mind of their descendants; and false and cruel as it was, it became the fixed and permanent tradition of their entire race. Though these traditions died out with the disappearance of the Nephites as an organized nationality, there being no longer any reason for keeping them alive, yet we have but to look at the Indians which we see around us, to behold the dreadful consequences of Laman's example, false traditions and life. The wild Indian, as we see him in our day, exactly personifies the life which Laman upwards of twenty-four centuries ago, chose for himself and descendants.

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## CHAPTER XII.

NEPHI PRACTICALLY THE LEADER—COMMANDED TO BUILD A SHIP—DIRECTED TO THE ORE OUT OF WHICH TO MAKE TOOLS—MAKES A BELLOWS—OBTAINS FIRE—FAULT-FINDING AND RIDICULE OF HIS BRETHREN—HIS SADNESS AND THEIR ELATION—THEY GRUMBLE AT AND REPROACH THEIR FATHER AND HIM—HE REASONS WITH THEM—ENRAGED, THEY ATTEMPT TO THROW HIM IN THE SEA—NEPHI FULL OF POWER OF GOD—THEY DARE NOT TOUCH HIM—THEY ARE SHAKEN BEFORE HIM—FALL DOWN TO WORSHIP HIM—TOLD BY NEPHI TO WORSHIP GOD—NEPHI SHOWN BY THE LORD HOW HE SHOULD WORK TIMBERS, ETC.—NOT WORKED AFTER THE MANNER TAUGHT BY MEN—HELPED BY HIS BROTHERS—SHIP FURNISHED—LAMAN AND OTHERS ACKNOWLEDGE NEPHI'S ABILITY TO BUILD A SHIP—MOUNTAINS AS PLACES OF WORSHIP.

**A**FTER the colony reached the land Bountiful it is noticeable that the practical leadership devolved upon Nephi, and it continued to be so from that time onward. He had grown strong in body—a stalwart, vigorous, energetic, untiring and undaunted man—but he had also grown in the knowledge and