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## Chapter XVII

Author(s): George Q. Cannon

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**Abstract:** Travel Many Days in the Wilderness—Call the Land Nephi—Did They Journey Northward?—Location of Land Nephi—River Sidon and Magdalena—Land of Zarahemla—Twenty-two Days' Travel from Nephi—Did not Land of Nephi Extend Considerably South?—Zeniff's Return to the Land of Nephi—Was that the Land Settled by Nephi, the First?—Mosiah, King of Zarahemla—Reasons for Thinking Nephi to be Distinguishing Name of an Extensive Region—Nephites Would Spread Over the Country in Four Hundred Years—Did Nephi and Company Travel as far North as Ecuador?—Followed by Lamanites—Jacob and Enos Respecting Lamanites—Nephi's Description of the Land—Bolivia and Peru—Cities and Settlements Called After Founders—Additional Reasons for Thinking Nephi and Company did not Settle so far North—Boundaries of Lands Occupied by Nephites and Lamanites—South America Called Lehi, North America Called Mulek

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## CHAPTER XVII.

TRAVEL MANY DAYS IN THE WILDERNESS—CALL THE LAND NEPHI—DID THEY JOURNEY NORTHWARD? LOCATION OF LAND NEPHI—RIVER SIDON AND MAGDALENA—LAND OF ZARAHEMLA—TWENTY-TWO DAYS' TRAVEL FROM NEPHI—DID NOT LAND OF NEPHI EXTEND CONSIDERABLY SOUTH?—ZENIFF'S RETURN TO THE LAND OF NEPHI—WAS THAT THE LAND SETTLED BY NEPHI, THE FIRST?—MOSIAH, KING OF ZARAHEMLA—REASONS FOR THINKING NEPHI TO BE DISTINGUISHING NAME OF AN EXTENSIVE REGION—NEPHITES WOULD SPREAD OVER THE COUNTRY IN FOUR HUNDRED YEARS—DID NEPHI AND COMPANY TRAVEL AS FAR NORTH AS ECUADOR?—FOLLOWED BY LAMANITES—JACOB AND ENOS RESPECTING LAMANITES—NEPHI'S DESCRIPTION OF THE LAND—BOLIVIA AND PERU—CITIES AND SETTLEMENTS CALLED AFTER FOUNDERS—ADDITIONAL REASONS FOR THINKING NEPHI AND COMPANY DID NOT SETTLE SO FAR NORTH—BOUNDARIES OF LANDS OCCUPIED BY NEPHITES AND LAMANITES—SOUTH AMERICA CALLED LEHI, NORTH AMERICA CALLED MULEK.

**A**FTER they separated from Laman and Lemuel, Nephi and his company traveled for many days in the wilderness and reached a land where they determined to settle. They selected for it the name of their leader, and it was called Nephi.

Nephi does not state in what direction he and his company traveled after separating from his brethren; but it is plain, from the allusions which are subsequently made to this land of Nephi by other writers, that they took their journey northward. It appears plain also that they traveled some distance in that direction. As Nephi was always careful to seek the guidance of the Lord in his movements, he was undoubtedly led by Him to the land where they settled. It is stated by Elder

Orson Pratt, in a foot-note to the new edition of the Book of Mormon, that the land of Nephi is supposed to have been in or near the country now called Ecuador. This supposition is based upon the general understanding that the river called the Sidon in the Book of Mormon is that now known as the Magdalena in our geographies. If this is correct, we can locate the land of Zarahemla with tolerable accuracy from the references which are made to it in the Book of Mormon: and as journeys were made between those two lands—Nephi and Zarahemla—and in one instance the time occupied in the journey is given—about twenty-two days—(Mosiah xxiii. 4, xxiv. 20-25,) some idea can be obtained of the distance between these two places.

But there are reasons for thinking that the land called Nephi was an extensive region, and that it reached much farther south than the country now known as Ecuador. Nearly four centuries after Nephi and his company separated from Laman and Lemuel and their companions, a prophet by the name of Mosiah was warned by the Lord to flee out of the land of Nephi, and to take with him all the Nephites who would "hearken unto the voice of the Lord." They were led by the power of God, through the wilderness, to the land of Zarahemla. Afterwards, some of the children of those who thus fled had a desire to return to the old home of their fathers, and expeditions were fitted out for that purpose. One of them under Zeniff was successful in securing a foothold in that land, though it had by that time been taken possession of by the Lamanites. By treaty with the king of the Lamanites, Zeniff and his people were permitted to occupy the cities of Lehi-Nephi and Shilom and the contiguous lands. They erected buildings and repaired the walls of those cities and cultivated the ground. Zeniff became their king. His son Noah succeeded him. In his days, Alma, a descendant of Nephi, baptized a number of people and organized them into a church. Being persecuted by King Noah, they left that country, and after meeting various adventures, reached Zarahemla. They numbered, when they started, four hundred and fifty souls, and we learn that the journey occupied about twenty-two days. This leads to the conclusion that the city of Lehi-Nephi, from

which they started, could not have been farther south than the country now called Ecuador.

But the inquiry arises, was this the place to which Nephi led his company when they separated from Laman and Lemuel and their adherents? The record informs us that when they fled from their wicked brethren they journeyed for many days, and they pitched their tents, "and," Nephi says, "my people would that we should call the name of the place Nephi; wherefore we did call it Nephi." Nearly four hundred years after this we find in the book of Omni (i. 12):

"Behold, I will speak unto you somewhat concerning Mosiah, who was made king over the land of Zarahemla: for behold, he being warned of the Lord that he should flee out of the land of Nephi, and as many as would hearken unto the voice of the Lord, should also depart out of the land with him, into the wilderness."

It appears clear that this name of Nephi was a general name for a large region of country, which comprised within its borders many smaller divisions known by various names. We infer this from the record; for Zeniff, upon his return to that which he calls, "the land of our fathers," had the liberty given him to occupy two places, or divisions, which he calls, "the land of Lehi-Nephi and the land of Shilom." Adjoining these was a portion of country known as "the land of Shemlon," which the Lamanites retained in their possession. In the borders of the country occupied by Zeniff and his Nephite people, was a place called Mormon. It was after this place that the great prophet and general of the Nephite nation, who led the hosts in the last, great conflict, was called. He himself speaks of it (III. Nephi v. 12) as "the land of Mormon." So it appears plain that there were many local divisions in the region which the Nephites had occupied.

We see that those whom Nephi led away from his wicked brethren, called the first place where they settled Nephi and themselves Nephites. Would not the same reasons prompt the nation as it increased and spread over the land, to call the whole region which it occupied, embracing all its local divisions, Nephi, or the land of Nephi, as its great distinguishing name? From the point where Nephi first settled, it is quite

likely his people extended to the northward; for in that direction they had room to spread, without coming in contact with the Lamanites. In this way the limits of "the land of Nephi" would be enlarged. Our own history in these mountains shows how this would be done. The Latter-day Saints came to the land we now call Utah thirty-four years ago. Salt Lake City was then settled. Since 1847 we have spread over a large extent of country. But this is a brief space, compared with the centuries which elapsed from the time that Nephi and his company fled from his brethren, to the departure of Mosiah and his company into the wilderness when they found Zarahemla. Though in the beginning the Nephites were but few in number, it is easy to understand that, in the space of nearly four hundred years, they would become quite numerous. We are told, that when two hundred years had elapsed they "had waxed strong in the land," as were also the Lamanites. Were not the cities of Lehi-Nephi and Shilom, and the lands bearing those names, some of the most northern of the Nephite settlements? There was a country, stretching to the south of those cities and lands, known by the general name of Nephi, which they had occupied, and from which they, doubtless, receded, through the pressure of the Lamanites upon them from the south, during the long period of time concerning which we have such brief mention. We know that the place where Lehi and his people landed on the continent was in the 30° of south latitude. Between this point and the southern boundary of Ecuador is a space of 26° of latitude, and includes the choice and desirable countries now known as the northern part of Chili, and Bolivia, and Peru—countries admirably adapted for the settlement and defense of a people like the Nephites. The question arises: Did Nephi and his people traverse this great distance when he separated himself from his brethren?

When Nephi and his people fled, they were followed, before long, by the Lamanites; for it appears that it was but a short period until Nephi manufactured swords, after the fashion of the sword of Laban, for his people to use in defending themselves against the attacks of the Lamanites. When forty years

had elapsed, Nephi informs us there had been wars and contentions between the two peoples; and Jacob, in speaking of his brother Nephi, and that which he had done for his people and their love for him, says that he had "wielded the sword of Laban in their defense." Jacob, and Enos, his son, speak of the Lamanites in such a manner as to leave no doubt that they and the whole Nephite people were familiar with them and their modes of life, and that they tried to teach them (Jacob ii. 35; iii. 5-9; Enos i. 13, 14, 20.). Whatever the distance, therefore, may have been that Nephi and his company fled, the Lamanites must have made the same journey not long after. Nephi informs us that they journeyed in the wilderness "for the space of many days" before they reached the place they called after his own name. His description of it leaves no doubt as to its fertility, its advantage for grazing, its abundance of timber, and its great mineral wealth. Besides the common metals, he speaks of gold and silver, and other precious ores, as being in great abundance. Traveling as they did, a company of men, women and children, with tents and other baggage, it would have required a journey of very "many days" from their place of landing to get beyond the confines of what is now called Chili and into Bolivia. In the lands now known as Bolivia and Peru, places can be found, which correspond exactly with the description of the place of settlement given in the record, particularly in the abundance of the precious metals. Those countries have not been excelled, even in our day, in the yield of these ores by any country in the world. Some of their mines are world-renowned; and within their borders places of great natural strength, which could be easily fortified against the incursions of a savage foe, are very numerous. Commencing their settlements here, and calling the land Nephi and themselves Nephites, they whom Nephi led could spread to the northward as they increased and necessity required, still applying the general name of Nephi to the whole country, but distinguishing their cities and settlements and sub-divisions by the names of their founders, as was their custom (Alma viii. 7), or by other names that circumstances might suggest, until they reached, in the days of Mosiah, as far north as what is now known as Ecuador, and had cities there, near the wilder-

ness on the north, known as Nephi or Lehi-Nephi, Shilom, Shemlon, etc.

Another reason also causes this view to appear probable; Nephi and his company could scarcely have settled at a point twenty-two days journey from Zarahemla without their descendants—scattered as they were upon the face of the land—coming in contact with the Zarahemlaites at an earlier date than the days of Mosiah, even though the people of Zarahemla may not have long resided at the point where he found them. It does not appear probable that, if the city of Nephi, or Lehi-Nephi as it is sometimes called, had been the city founded by the first Nephi, there would have been a wilderness so close to it on the north, as there appears from the record to have been, after four hundred years had elapsed.

In the description of the boundaries of the lands occupied by the Nephites and the Lamanites (Alma xxii. 27-32) it is stated that, “the more idle part of the Lamanites lived in the wilderness, and dwelt in tents; and they were spread through the wilderness, on the west, in the land of Nephi; yea, and also on the west of the land of Zarahemla, in the borders by the seas-hore, and on the west, in the land of Nephi, in the place of their fathers’ first inheritance, and thus bordering along by the sea-shore.”

Here our two allusions to the land of Nephi, and without desiring to favor any particular theory or to strain the language to sustain any special views, it conveys to us the idea, when taken in connection with other facts contained in the record, that the land of Nephi was, as we have said, an extensive region, embracing at least the west side of the continent with the Pacific shore for some distance to the south, and perhaps embracing within its boundaries the whole of the south continent outside of the limits of Zarahemla. In the same chapter (verse 34) the same idea is clearly expressed in the language “that the Lamanites could have no more possessions only in the land of Nephi and the wilderness round about,” and this, too, at a time when the whole continent, south of the line of the land of Zarahemla, was either in possession of the Lamanites, or open to them. It must not be forgotten, however, that what is now known in geography as South America was

called Lehi, and North America was called Mulek by the Nephites. (Helaman vi. 10).

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

TRAVELERS' DESCRIPTIONS OF LAND ONCE OCCUPIED BY NEPHITES—CRADLE OF AN IMPERIAL RACE—THE PRODUCTIONS OF THE LAND IN MODERN TIMES AGREE WITH DESCRIPTION OF SAME IN BOOK OF MORMON—RAPID RECOVERY FROM EFFECTS OF DISASTROUS COMMOTIONS AND WARS ACCOUNTED FOR—HEALTHY CLIMATE—REMARKABLE LONGEVITY—JACOB, ENOS, JAROM AND OMNI—LONGEVITY OF INDIANS IN ECUADOR AND PERU.

A TRAVELER by the name of Markham, (Jour. of English Geog. Soc. Vol. xli., 1871, pp. 285, 286.) in speaking of the country between the northern line of Chili and the southern line of Ecuador—the country which we think was called the land of Nephi, and in some portion of which Nephi settled with his people when he fled from his brethren—says:

“This vast tract comprises every variety of climate, and contains within its limits most prolific tropical forests, valleys with the climate of Italy, a coast region resembling Sinde or Egypt, temperate hillsides or plateaux, bleak and chilling pasture lands, and lofty peaks and ridges within the limits of eternal snows. On one mountain side the eye may embrace, at a single glance, sugar cane and bananas under cultivation in the lowest zone, waving fields of Indian corn a little higher up, shaded by tall trees, orchards of tropical fruits, stretches of wheat and barley, steep slopes, covered with potatoes and quinua, bleak pastures where llamas and alpacas are browsing, and rocky pinnacles streaked with snow.”

Such a country, with such a variety of climates and products, was well adapted for the cradle of an imperial race as the Nephites proved to be. The mighty obstacles of nature, which