



Type: Book Chapter

Chapter XIX

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Source: *The Life of Nephi, the Son of Lehi*

Published: Salt Lake City; Juvenile Instructor Office, 1883

Pages: 95-102

Abstract: Two Distinct Nations—Intermingled—Mixed Blood in Lamanites—Nephi and Company Settled in an Earthly Paradise—Greatly Prospered—Law of Moses Observed—A Live Religion—Nephi Conversed with the Spirit of the Lord—Heard Voices of the Father and the Son—Understood the Gospel of Jesus—Simplicity and Plainness of His Teachings, Prophecies and Revelations Wonderful Extent and Variety of His Knowledge—Writes of the Days of the Savior as a Contemporary Might—Exactness of the Description of the Great and Abominable Church—Also the Events which Should Take Place in Connection with Zion—Only Two Churches—The Whore of all the Earth should Gather Multitudes among all the Nations of Gentiles to Fight Against the Church of the Lamb—Power of God Poured Out Upon the Latter, His Wrath Upon the Former—They who Fight Against the House of Israel shall War among Themselves and Fall into the Pit they shall Dig to Ensnare the People of the Lord—The Righteous Should Not Perish—Great Value of These Promises to the Latter-day Saints—Secret Combinations—Many Churches to be Built Up—Their Character—The Book of Mormon, How it should be Received—Churches Put Down the Power and Miracles of God—Preach up their own Wisdom and Learning—Contend One with Another—Grind the Poor—Literal Fulfillment as Latter-day Saints can Testify

CHAPTER XIX.

TWO DISTINCT NATIONS—INTERMINGLED—MIXED BLOOD IN LAMANITES—NEPHI AND COMPANY SETTLED IN AN EARTHLY PARADISE—GREATLY PROSPERED—LAW OF MOSES OBSERVED—A LIVE RELIGION—NEPHI CONVERSED WITH THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD—HEARD VOICES OF THE FATHER AND THE SON—UNDERSTOOD THE GOSPEL OF JESUS—SIMPLICITY AND PLAINNESS OF HIS TEACHINGS, PROPHECIES AND REVELATIONS—WONDERFUL EXTENT AND VARIETY OF HIS KNOWLEDGE—WRITES OF THE DAYS OF THE SAVIOR AS A CONTEMPORARY MIGHT—EXACTNESS OF DESCRIPTION OF THE GREAT AND ABOMINABLE CHURCH—ALSO THE EVENTS WHICH SHOULD TAKE PLACE IN CONNECTION WITH ZION—ONLY TWO CHURCHES—THE WHORE OF ALL THE EARTH SHOULD GATHER MULTITUDES AMONG ALL THE NATIONS OF GENTILES TO FIGHT AGAINST THE CHURCH OF THE LAMB—POWER OF GOD POURED OUT UPON THE LATTER, HIS WRATH UPON THE FORMER—THEY WHO FIGHT AGAINST THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL SHALL WAR AMONG THEMSELVES AND FALL INTO THE PIT THEY SHALL DIG TO ENSNARE THE PEOPLE OF THE LORD—THE RIGHTEOUS SHOULD NOT PERISH—GREAT VALUE OF THESE PROMISES TO LATTER-DAY SAINTS—SECRET COMBINATIONS—MANY CHURCHES TO BE BUILT UP—THEIR CHARACTER—THE BOOK OF MORMON, HOW IT SHOULD BE RECEIVED—CHURCHES PUT DOWN THE POWER AND MIRACLES OF GOD—PREACH UP THEIR OWN WISDOM AND LEARNING—CONTEND ONE WITH ANOTHER—GRIND THE POOR—LITERAL FULFILLMENT AS LATTER-DAY SAINTS CAN TESTIFY.

THE separation of Nephi and his people from Laman and those who adhered to him made them a distinct nation. Thus two nations—the Nephites and the Lamanites—grew up upon this continent, as dissimilar and as much at variance in

their modes of thought and habits of life, in their religious views and traditions and governmental policy and aims, as if they were two races of widely separated and foreign origin. Under the influence of two causes, which operated at different periods almost through their entire existence, members of each nation were led to intermingle and identify themselves with the other; these were: apostacy from their religion on the part of the Nephites, and conversion to its holy principles on the part of the Lamanites. The Nephite nationality had an existence of a little less than ten hundred years; but for nearly the entire first six hundred of these, and a little more than the last hundred, a wall of division existed between them and they were distinct peoples. They had, however, mingled together at various periods, as we have said, to such an extent that, after the last great battle which resulted in the destruction of the Nephite nationality, descendants of all the original families were left among the survivors; so that the blood of Nephi, of Sam, of Jacob, of Joseph and of Zoram still coursed in the veins, as it does to this day, of those known by the name of Lamanites; besides, there was the blood of the people known as Zarahemlaites, who came to this land with Mulek, a son of Zedekiah, king of Judah, and who were afterwards identified with the Nephites.

The land to which Nephi and his company were led was probably not excelled for fertility of soil, for healthfulness and agreeableness of climate, for abundance and variety of vegetables and minerals, for grandeur and beauty of scenery by any other part of this "promised land" and certainly by no other land outside of this continent. It abounded in all the elements necessary to make a nation rich and powerful. It was an earthly paradise. When they reached their new home they devoted themselves to agriculture and the production of all kinds of useful animals, as they had done when they first landed on the continent. In these labors they were greatly prospered, and they also multiplied rapidly. Their form of religion was in strict conformity with the law of Moses. But it was not with them a religion of empty forms and ceremonies. Nephi had conversed in the wilderness, shortly after they had left Jerusalem, with the Spirit of the Lord, as one man

speaketh to another; "for," said he, "I beheld he was in the form of a man; yet nevertheless I knew that it was the Spirit of the Lord." He had also heard the voices of both the Father and the Son. The Lord taught him heavenly things and led him by His voice from his boyhood all through his life. He understood the gospel of Jesus and taught it to his people in the greatest plainness, and without doubt administered unto them the ordinances thereof. His exposition of the first principles of the gospel, in the last three chapters of his second book (*II. Nephi, xxxi, xxxii and xxxiii chapters*) is as lucid and comprehensive as can be found in any of the divine records which have come to us. He informs us that he delighted and gloried in plainness, and certainly his prophecies and revelations which he recorded, and which are in the Book of Mormon, though they relate to stupendous and marvellous events, are conveyed in such simplicity and plainness that a child of ordinary understanding can comprehend the language. It is truly wonderful how exact and perfect his knowledge was concerning the name of the Savior, the name that His mother should bear, the time when and the place where He should be born, the events of His career, the doctrines which He should teach, the apostles whom He should select, the miracles which He should work, and the details of His persecution and death. Though he wrote but little short of 600 years before the Lamb of God appeared in the flesh, the incidents of His life are given with the minute fidelity of a well-informed contemporary.

It is not, however, his revelations concerning these which alone show the extent of his knowledge as a prophet of God. There is scarcely an event connected with our own day that he has not alluded to. A more graphic account than he gives of the condition of the people at the time the Book of Mormon should be revealed and come forth, and the effects which should follow its publication and the organization of the Church, is nowhere to be found. Indeed we do not see how a modern writer, familiar with all that has taken place in the time referred to, could in the same space, give a clearer description of these events than that given by Nephi in his record. This is due, of course, to the inspiration of the Lord which rested upon him. He saw by vision all these events take place as

clearly as if he had been present in the flesh when they occurred.

He saw the Virgin Mary, the mother of the Son of God, and saw Him also as an infant and as a man; saw Him baptized by the prophet, and the Holy Ghost come down out of heaven upon Him; he saw Him go forth ministering unto the people, healing the sick, casting out devils and performing other mighty miracles, and he saw the twelve apostles following Him. He beheld the Lamb of God taken by the people and judged, lifted upon the cross and slain for the sins of the world; and afterwards saw the warfare that was waged against His apostles by the world. The Lord also revealed to him all that should take place upon this continent among his own descendants and the descendants of his wicked brethren; and he saw the Lamb of God descend from heaven and show Himself to those who should survive the terrible judgments which should take place at His crucifixion, and that He should also choose twelve apostles from among them to minister to them. The mighty events which should take place among them after this, up to the time the Nephite nation should be blotted out, as well as the fate which awaited the conquerors up to the discovery of the continent by white men; and afterwards until a remnant of them should receive the Book of Mormon which should be carried to them by believing Gentiles—Latter-day Saints, in fact—by means of which they should be brought to a knowledge of their ancestry and of the gospel which their fathers enjoyed; were all shown in vision to Nephi. He saw that the remnants of his and his brothers' descendants, known as Lamanites, would be killed and driven and scattered by the white men who should come to this continent; but they should not all perish; the Lord would remember them, reveal His covenant to them, in which they should rejoice and many generations would not pass away among them until they should become a white and delightful people. By vision, also, he saw that the Jews would be scattered among all nations; and that, at about the time the work of God would commence among the Lamanites, they would be gathered from the various nations and would return to their own land.

Like John, the beloved disciple, he has left on record his testimony concerning the great and abominable church, which should be among the Gentile nations. He saw that the devil was the foundation of that church. The desires of that great and abominable church were gold, silver, silks, scarlets, fine-twined linen, precious clothing and harlots; and that by it, for the praise of the world, the Saints of God would be destroyed and brought down into captivity. He saw that from the record of the Jews (the Bible) many parts which were plain and most precious and also many covenants of the Lord, all of which belonged to the gospel of the Lamb, were taken away by the great and abominable church, the object being to pervert the right ways of the Lord, that the eyes of the children of men might be blinded and their hearts be hardened. Because of this many of the Gentiles would stumble. Nephi calls that church, "the whore of all the earth;" she sat upon many waters and had dominion over all the earth, among all nations, kindreds, tongues and people.

He saw that after the Church of the Lamb would be organized there would be two churches only—the Church of the Lamb of God, and the church of the devil; whoso belongeth not to the former, belongeth to the other, the mother of abominations and the whore of all the earth. He saw that the numbers of the Church of the Lamb were few, because of the wickedness and abominations of the whore who sat upon many waters; and though they were also upon all the face of the earth, for the same reason that they were few in number, their dominions upon the face of the earth were small. Yet notwithstanding this was the condition of the Church of the Lamb, the mother of abominations was not satisfied. She wanted the Church of the Lamb destroyed. She gathered together multitudes upon the face of all the earth, among all the nations of the Gentiles, to fight against it.

How literally these predictions are being fulfilled in our day, upwards of fifty years after the publication of his record, and his record was published before there was any organization of the Church of the Lamb of God, we all know! But Nephi says (and it comes filled with consolation and encouragement to the Latter-day Saints) that he beheld the power of the Lamb

of God upon the Saints of the Church of the Lamb and upon the covenant people of the Lord, who were scattered upon all the face of the earth, and they were armed with righteousness and with the power of God in great glory. He beheld also that the wrath of God was poured out upon the mother of harlots, insomuch that there were wars and rumors of wars among all the nations and kindreds of the earth. He was also told that when this should take place. "at that day, the work of the Father shall commence in preparing the way for the fulfilling of His covenants which He had made to His people, who are of the house of Israel." Nephi also predicted that those who belonged to the great and abominable church should war among themselves, and the sword of their own hands should fall upon their own heads: and that every nation which should war against the house of Israel should be turned one against another, and they should fall into the pit which they had dug to ensnare the people of the Lord. He said the righteous should not perish, even if their enemies had to be destroyed by fire; for the time must surely come that all they who fight against Zion should be cut off. But he predicted the overthrow and destruction of the churches which should belong to the kingdom of the devil, the great whore of all the earth—the churches which are built up to get gain, to get power over the flesh, to become popular in the eyes of the world, which seek the lusts of the flesh and the things of the world, and to do all manner of iniquity; they had need to fear and tremble and quake; they must be brought low in the dust; they must be consumed as stubble.

The promises which the Lord made through Nephi in his record are of the utmost value to the Church of Christ in our day. How encouraging it is to know in the midst of the deadly hostility against the work of God, and the incessant attacks which are being made upon it that "he that fighteth against Zion, both Jew and Gentile, both bond and free, both male and female, shall perish!"

Nephi not only saw the emigration of the Gentile people to this land, but he saw the struggle for independence and the results which should follow. He described the growth of the nation, the policy it should pursue towards the remnants of his own

and brothers' descendants, and the glorious destiny which it should achieve if it should espouse the gospel when it should be revealed; and, on the other hand, predicted the direful consequences which should follow its rejection by the nation.

Half a century and upwards has the rejection of the gospel, and a warfare against its believers now been continued, and we behold these direful consequences taking place, exactly as Nephi, inspired of God, said they should. The condition of the Gentile world at the time of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon and the organization of the Church in our day, is most accurately portrayed. Secret combinations should exist. Many churches would be built up; they would cause envyings, strifes and malice; and because of pride, of false teachers and false doctrines, their churches would become corrupted and lifted up. They would rob the poor, because of their fine sanctuaries; they would rob the poor, because of their fine clothing, and persecute the meek and poor, because in their pride they would be puffed up. Against the wise, and the learned, and the rich, that are puffed up in the pride of their hearts, and all those who preach false doctrines, and all those who commit whoredoms, and pervert the right way of the Lord, he says, the Lord has pronounced a wo, and said they should be thrust down to hell.

The very words which should be used, and which have been used, among the Gentile nations concerning the Book of Mormon after it should be published, are given by this great prophet; also the course which should be taken by the Gentiles who would believe and receive it, in carrying it to the present Indians—the descendants of himself and brothers—and the effect it would have upon them.

Though many churches would be built, they would put down the power and miracles of God, and preach up unto themselves their own wisdom and their own learning, that they might get gain and grind upon the face of the poor. One would say unto the other: "Behold I, I am the Lord's;" and the other would say: "I, I am the Lord's;" they would contend one with another; they would teach with their learning and deny the Holy Ghost which giveth the utterance. They would say, "Behold ye, hearken unto my precept; if they

shall say, there is a miracle wrought by the hand of the Lord, believe it not; for this day He is not a God of miracles.”

How completely and literally these predictions have been fulfilled, the Latter-day Saints, and especially the Elders who have gone out to preach the gospel, can testify. They are eye and ear witnesses to the truth of Nephi's record in the Book of Mormon. The men who have opposed the work of God in these days, have not thought that, in making use of the expressions they have, they were fulfilling predictions recorded in the Book of Mormon, and which were made upwards of twenty-four hundred years ago. These words were published before the class had been tested by the Elders of the Church of the Lamb, for at their publication the Church had not been organized; but the Lord knew the language they would use; He knew the spirit they would yield to; and He inspired His servants to make the predictions. Had Nephi been writing from personal experience with the class to which he refers, he could not have quoted their stock phrases any better. He has given us a picture, which possesses more than photographic accuracy of detail, of society as it should exist when the Book of Mormon should come forth, and the changes which should take place subsequent to that event and the organization of the Church, embracing also the fate that will befall our own nation and the modern nations of Europe under certain conditions which he specifies.