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## Lesson 65 - The Temple in the Land of Nephi

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# Deseret Sunday School Union Leaflets

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## LESSON 65.—THE TEMPLE IN THE LAND OF NEPHI.

PLACE.—Land of Nephi.

TEXT.—II. Nephi 5:16.

And I, Nephi, did build a temple;<sup>1</sup> and I did construct it after the manner of the temple of Solomon, save it were not built of so many precious things; for they were not to be found upon the land; wherefore it could not be built like unto Solomon's temple.<sup>2</sup> But the manner of the construction was like unto the temple of Solomon; and the workmanship thereof was exceeding fine.

1. Jacob 1:17; Mosiah 1:18; 2:1,5,6,7; 7:17; 11:10,12; 19:5; Alma 10:2; Helaman 3:9,14; 10:8; III. Nephi 11:1. 2. I. Kings, chap. 5, *et seq.*; II. Chron., chap. 2, *et seq.*\*

\* *Et seq.*—An abbreviation of the Latin *et sequentia*, or *et sequentes*, meaning "and what follows," "and the following:" as, compare chapter 5 *et seq.*

### LESSON STATEMENT.

As soon as possible after the arrival of Nephi and his people at their new home, which they called the Land of Nephi, they commenced to build a temple to the Most High God. This they were compelled to do, in order that they might observe the requirements of the law of Moses, as God had commanded them. For without a temple they could not offer the sacrifices and burnt offerings required by that law; and it was then in force to all the house of Israel, of which the Nephites were a branch, and so continued until the great sacrifice was offered up on Mount Calvary, of which all others were but types. So to fulfill the law, temples were built by the Nephites in every land that they colonized; and in different parts of the Book of Mormon we read of temples being built by them in the lands of Nephi, Lehi-Nephi, Zarahemla, Bountiful and other places. Less than fifty years B. C. one historian states (Helaman 3:14):

"But behold a hundredth part of the proceedings of this people, yea, the account of the Lamanites, and of the Nephites, and their wars, and contentions, and dissensions, and their preaching, and their prophecies, and their shipping, and their building of ships, and their *building of temples*, and of synagogues, and their sanctuaries \* \* \* cannot be contained in this work." That the Nephites by thus building temples in every land in which they dwelt were simply carrying out the commandments of God is proved by His word to His people in these days, wherein he says:

"Therefore, verily I say unto you, that your anointings, and your washings, and your baptisms for the dead, and your solemn assemblies, and your memorials for your sacrifices, by the sons of Levi, and for your oracles in your most holy places, wherein you receive conversations, and your statutes and judgments, for the beginning of the revelations and foundation of Zion, and for the glory, honor, and endowment of all her municipalities, are ordained by the ordinance of my holy house which my people are always commanded to build unto my holy name." (Doctrine and Covenants, Sec. 124:39.)

The temple built in the land of Nephi was evidently patterned after that built by Solomon, for it was to be used for the same purposes; but, as the principles of the Gospel were taught to the Nephites as well as the Mosaic law, it is reasonable to suppose that many of the ordinances now administered in

temples were also performed there. The most marked difference between the Temple of Solomon and that of Nephi was that the latter "was not built of so many precious things" as the former. We are also justified in believing, as it was built by a very small people, and was simply intended to meet their needs, that it was probably smaller than the temple at Jerusalem. To build one as large as that of Solomon would have been an almost impossible task for a people so few in numbers. Still this is but conjecture, as Nephi is entirely silent with regard to the dimensions of the building.

This temple was occasionally, if not ordinarily, used for the public gatherings of the Nephites. Jacob, the brother of Nephi, used it for such a purpose (Jacob 2:2). This was also the case with the one afterwards erected in the city of Zarahemla; when King Benjamin desired to give his last address to his people and present his successor (his son, Mosiah II,) he directed that the people should be gathered at that temple to hear his words. (Mosiah 2:1).

#### NOTES.

**SOLOMON.**—The youngest son of David and Bathsheba. He succeeded his father on the throne of the kingdom of Israel and reigned for forty years (B. C. 1015-975), during the period that that nation reached the zenith of its power and glory. He is most celebrated for his wisdom, as the Lord promised him a wise and understanding heart; so that as there had been none like unto him before, none should afterwards arise like unto him in judgment (I. Kings 3:12).

**TEMPLE OF SOLOMON.**—It was David, King of Israel, who first proposed to replace the Tabernacle by a more permanent building at Jerusalem, but was forbidden by the Lord, for the reasons assigned by the prophet Nathan (II. Samuel 7:5-29,) and though he collected materials and made arrangements, the execution of the task was left for his son Solomon. He, with the assistance of Hiram, king of Tyre, commenced this great undertaking in the fourth year of his reign (B. C. 1012) and completed it in seven years (B. C. 1005). It occupied the site prepared for it by David, which had

formerly been the threshing floor of the Jebusite Ornan or Araunah, on Mount Moriah. The whole area enclosed by the outer walls is believed to have formed a square of about 600 feet; but the sanctuary itself was comparatively small, as it was intended only for the ministrations of the priests, the congregation of the people assembling in the courts.

#### WHAT WE MAY LEARN FROM THIS LESSON.

1. That the Nephites, soon after their separation from the followers of Laman, began to build a temple.
2. That it was built after the manner of Solomon's Temple at Jerusalem.
3. That the Nephites could not keep the commandments of God without they did build a temple.
4. That they there offered the sacrifices and burnt offerings, required by the law of Moses; and, as they were also taught the principles of the Gospel, it is presumable that many of the ordinances now administered in temples were performed there.
5. That God always commands His people to build temples to His holy name.
6. That in compliance with this command the Nephites built many temples in the lands which they occupied.

#### QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON.

1. What did Nephi build?
2. In what land was it built?
3. After what pattern was it built?
4. In what did it differ from the temple of Solomon?
5. What were the reasons for this difference?
6. Who was Solomon?
7. Why was this temple built by the Nephites?
8. In what respects would they have been wanting if they had not built it?
9. What ordinances were performed therein?
10. What has God always commanded His people with regard to temples?
11. Name some other places where the Nephites built temples?
12. What can you tell regarding the workmanship of Nephi's temple?