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## The Departure of a Choice Seed from Palestine

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## LESSON II.

## Work and Business

Second Week in March.

## LESSON III.

## Book of Mormon

(Optional)

Third Week in March.

### THE DEPARTURE OF A CHOICE SEED FROM PALESTINE.

TEXT: Jeremiah 48:32; 2:20-21; 49:30-34; Isiah 16:8; 1 Chron. 9:3; 7:28; 2 Chron. 15:8-9; 17:2; 30-18; Book of Ether; Lesson III.

AIM OR CENTRAL TRUTH: The purposes of God were best served when Joseph was separated from his brethren and this may also be truly said in relation to Joseph's posterity.

Referring now to Jeremiah 49:30-34, wherein he sounds the alarm of Israel's impending danger in the following language and which fully portrays the troublesome scenes which so suddenly followed its utterance, let us see how minutely Joseph's land is described and the nature and character of the people who are to dwell therein: "O ye inhabitants of Nazor, saith the Lord; for Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, hath taken counsel against you, and hath conceived a purpose against you. Arise, get you up unto the wealthy nation that dwelleth without care, saith the Lord, which have neither gates and bars, which dwell alone. And their camels shall be a booty, and the multitude of their cattle a spoil; and I will scatter into all winds them that are in the utmost corners; and I will bring their calamity from all sides thereof, saith the Lord, and Hazor shall be a dwelling for dragons, and a desolation forever; then shall no man abide there, nor any son of man dwell in it."

The analysis of the foregoing brings out the following facts:

1. The warning to the people was to flee from the dominions of the king of Babylon, who at that time held complete sway in the countries of the east.

2. If the people heeded the warning, they should be led to a wealthy nation!

3. This land was to have been inhabited, heretofore, by a people who dwelt without gates and bars, no walls or anything to prevent individuals from going there and taking possession.

4. The cattle and camels, domestic animals, could be had in that land for the taking.

5. Such a country existed somewhere on earth, if the prophecy is to be relied upon, and at a time, too, when the prophecy was uttered.

Where was it? Surely not in any land possessed by the twelve tribes. Subsequent history does not answer the question except in one instance. That instance is the Book of Mormon which came forth in the year 1829 asserting that at the time the prophecy was uttered, about 620 B. C., such a country existed; namely, the American continent; that this land, up to this date, or thereabouts, had been inhabited by a people led hitherto from the plains of Shinar at the time of the confounding of the language; a people who had been greatly enriched and had builded cities, towns and earthworks; who had been rich in cattle and camels and all kinds of animals, and in mines and mining; a people who had been, at this time, hurriedly gathered together by their leaders in civil strife and mortal combat, leaving their cities unkept, and their flocks and herds free to wander, while the inhabitants exterminated one another with the sword. (See Book of Ether.)

Let us now refer to the predictions with reference to the departure from Jerusalem of the people who evidently were led to the land spoken of by inspired men heretofore considered. In Jeremiah 48:32 we read, "O vine of Sibmah, I will weep for thee with the weeping of Jazer: Thy plants are gone over the sea, they reach even to the Sea of Jazer: the spoiler is fallen upon thy summer fruits, and upon thy vintage."

The significant fact in the foregoing prophecy is the dispersion of Israel's beloved, introduced under the figure of a choice vine whose "plants are gone over the sea." In connection with this prophetic utterance we introduce that of Isaiah who, like Jeremiah, lived at Jerusalem, preceding him by a few years, and who specifically sets forth the great event in the following language: "For the fields of Heshbon languish, and the vine of Sibmah: the Lords of the Heathen have broken down the principal plants thereof, they are come even unto Jazer, they wandered through the wilderness: her branches are stretched out, they are gone over the sea."

These two great prophets, both living at Jerusalem and seeing the same great and important event, agree that the choice seed of Israel have left the land of their nativity and "are gone over the Sea." Now, if we pass in our mind over the sea, from the old country of Jazer on the east of the Mediterranean, in either direction so as to pass over the Sea, America is the only land we shall find which answers the de-

scription of Joseph's land as foretold by Israel and Moses. (See Lesson III.)

Referring to the vine of Sibmah, its significance may be understood by taking it in connection with Jeremiah 2:20-21: "For of old time I have broken thy yoke, and burst thy bands; and thou saidst, thou wilt not transgress; when upon every high hill and every green tree thou wanderest playing the harlot. Yet I have planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed. How then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me?" Sibmah refers to that which is desirable, excellent, choice. It was at Sibmah and Heshbon where the famous vineyards were located, and at the time of these prophets, were famed for the abundance and excellence of their grapes. Hence the figure, "Vine of Sibmah," can properly be interpreted, "a noble vine," "a right seed," which was positively true of Ephraim and Manasseh.

At this point it might be contended that Jerusalem and contiguous country belonged to the tribe of Judah and that the posterity of Joseph had no portion therein, that neither Ephraim nor Manasseh whose blessings should exceed those of their brethren lived at, or in the country of Jerusalem. To these we would say that it was common for individuals of different tribes to take up their residence in the territory of other tribes, especially was it true of Ephraim and Manasseh as witness the following: "And in Jerusalem dwelt of the children of Judah, and of the children of Benjamin, and of the children of Ephraim and Manasseh." 1 Chron. 9:3.

**Note:** As to the assignments of these Book of Mormon lessons, it is thought best that in the future, the teachers prepare their own assignments, and that they be given to the class members at least one week before the class recitation. As an aid to the preparation of a good assignment and its importance, the teachers are referred to the December number of the "Relief Society Magazine," page 691, commencing with the paragraph introducing the "Suggestive Assignment." Much development will come to the teacher as well as a conscious power to teach the lesson effectively, if she will strive intelligently to assign each lesson.

## Literature

(Optional)

### TENNYSON AND BRITISH NATIONAL LIFE.

In the first lesson, it was said that Tennyson reflected the spirit and thought of his time more truly than any other English poet of the period. This he did to the very great pride of the British people, in most instances. His "Ode to the Duke of Wellington," wherein he pays special tribute to Nelson and Wellington, is a tremendous realization of the thing sought for. Seldom does it happen that such perfection is reached