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## Redemption of the Lamanites

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**Abstract:** A brief article explaining some of the persecutions as well as progress that the Native Americans have experienced. When Melvin J. Ballard visited Ft. Peck and Blackfoot reservations the Indians knew him and were waiting for the “Book” because they had seen him in dreams. Ballard, Holdaway writes, believed the Three Nephites had labored among those Indians for years.

# REDEMPTION OF THE LAMANITES

BY ANNIE W. HOLDAWAY

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The greatest work of this dispensation is to be the redemption of mankind, both the living and the dead. The hearts of the fathers must turn to the children, and the children to the fathers, lest the whole earth be smitten with a curse.

Israel, scattered during former dispensations is to be gathered "one of a city and two of a family." (Isa. 11:11-12, Jer. 3:12-18.) We are told in the Scriptures that the ten tribes are to return from the North countries and are to come "with songs of everlasting joy, to be crowned with glory by the hands of the servants of the Lord, even the children of Ephraim." (Doc. and Cov. 133:8.)

The gospel is to be taken to the Lamanites, the scales of darkness will begin to fall from their eyes preparatory to their becoming a white and a delightsome people. "Before the great day of the Lord shall come, Jacob shall flourish in the wilderness, and the Lamanites shall blossom as the rose." (2 Nephi 30:3-6; Doc. and Cov. 49:24.)

From the Book of Mormon we learn that the Lamanites are descendants of the sons of Lehi, a High Priest living in Jerusalem 600 years before Christ. Lehi was commanded of the Lord to leave that city on account of the destruction soon to overtake it, and was led to America "even a land choice above all other lands."

When Columbus came to America in 1492, supposing he had reached the shores of India, he called the inhabitants "Indians," which misnomer has been applied to them ever since that day. With the coming forth of the Book of Mormon we learned the true descent of these Indians, and therefore, call them Lamanites.

From the Patriarchs of the Church we learn that we are of Ephraim; hence the blessed privilege as well as the tremendous responsibility is ours of ministering to the seed of Laman, and therefore of Lehi, the ordinances of the Lord's House, both for the living and the dead.

When the Pilgrim Fathers came in 1620, they found the country far and wide filled with "red men." The untutored Lamanites were friendly, and divided their food and their land with the new comers. More and more white settlers came and wanted "more land." Big land deals were put through and agreements entered into between the two races; and be it said to the credit of the poor degraded "red man," that he never broke faith with the white man; whenever a treaty was broken the whites were nearly always the aggressors. This is according to the history left us, written, not by the Indian, but by the white historians. Finally the Indians lost confidence in white men and became alarmed at their increasing numbers and power. They

went out on the war-path to defend themselves, their families and their original possessions. They were scourged and smitten and driven, which is according to prophecy in the Book of Mormon, on account of their rebellion and rejection of the gospel when it was upon the earth centuries ago. Nephi, Mormon, Moroni, the Indian prophet Samuel, and others, prophets of the Lord, foresaw these things, and forewarned them in case they did not live according to the laws of the gospel; but they would not hearken, so they "dwindled in unbelief."

When the Prophet Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon at the commencement of this dispensation, he, knowing that the "red men" were of the Royal House, tried to deliver this wonderful book to them, as it is the history of their forefathers. At that time the Church was but a handful, weak in numbers and in power, and most unpopular. It is doubtful that "Uncle Sam" would have done what he has done for them as proteges of the Government, had they borne the name, "Mormon."

For two centuries there was bitter enmity between the Indians and whites. In order to bring the so-called savages into subjection, our Government put them on Indian reservations, and recorded their names, also the different tribes to which they belonged, with dates, etc. In so doing "Uncle Sam" did not realize what a good work he was doing by making a beginning in the recording of their genealogy. Today there are thousands of those names recorded with data sufficient for their descendants and friends to do proxy work for them in the temples, these records dating back to the 16th century, or two generations prior to the landing of the *Mayflower*.

#### *The Lamanite Society*

Four years ago (13th of Oct., 1919), a movement was inaugurated with the consent of President Anthon H. Lund, President of the Genealogical Society of the Church, to lay the foundation of a society which should combine the forces of interest, work and workers in this cause.

On the evening of October 13, 1923, in Barratt Hall, this Society celebrated its fourth anniversary, and elected officers for the ensuing year, under the supervision of Elder Melvin J. Ballard, of the Council of the Twelve, as follows:

President, Horace H. Cummings; Vice-Presidents, Junius Romney, Elizabeth C. McCune, all of Salt Lake City; Margarito Bautista, Mexican mission; Jackson Galbraith, G. Gordon White, Canadian mission. Genealogist and recorder, Mrs. Annie W. Holdaway; assistant recorder, Castulo Martinez; assistants in typing and index work, Mr. and Mrs. Manuel Torrez; and Mrs. Rafael Torrez; secretary, Miss Mary Campbell; assistant secretary, Mrs. Fern R. Wheeler; treasurer, Mrs. Martha Cox. This broad foundation for work indicates the building of a wonderful future, and the "dawning of a brighter day," for the Lamanitish races.

There is also a local branch of Lamanites in this city organized in April, 1920, under the supervision of President Nephi L. Morris, as most of the members are living in the Salt Lake stake. It has about 65 members including local president and counselors, teachers, priests and deacons, Sunday school superintendent and counselors, secretary, treasurer, Sunday school teachers, chorister, organist and ward or branch clerk. Services are held regularly in the Spanish language, and gospel tracts printed in Spanish are distributed free to investigators. By this means their numbers are growing. In 1922, this little branch paid to the Church in tithes and offerings a goodly amount and from present indications, will do still better in 1923.

### *Progress of the Work*

The North Dakota, Southern States, Arizona and other missions embracing Lamanite territory are to have a vice-president each, appointed by the president of these missions, who will co-operate with the parent association at the Utah Genealogical Library, thus linking together in a most substantial manner this splendid effort. All lists coming in from whatsoever source in this way can be compared with the index of work already done, and so eliminate duplication.

The promises of the Lord to the branch of Israel which were to come through Ephraim are many. "A nation will be born in a day," we are told. They are to be a bulwark unto this people according to the Doctrine and Covenants and are to assist in the building of the temple of the New Jerusalem upon this continent.

The Lord is multiplying means in the hands of the Indians. When our Government set apart certain tracts of land as Indian reservations, they were not the choice sections, but were the less desirable scraps of rocky and desert lands here and there. Government titles, together with water rights, were given to the Indians as an everlasting inheritance to them and their children after them. Government and mission schools were established among them, and they were taught to read and write. Today fifty percent of all the Indians on reservations hold titles to their lands, and twenty-five percent of them can read and write English. In 1917 there were 324 Government and mission schools, with an enrollment of 30,929. Besides these, there were 448 district schools on or near reservations attended by about half and half Indian and white children.

The Academic courses in such schools include agriculture, pedagogy, stenography, business practice, the usual scholastic and cultural lines with the industrial arts. The trades include practical training in farming, dairying, horticulture, dressmaking, cooking, laundering, housekeeping and twenty trades.

Many Indian law students have graduated and are practicing law. Two of our U. S. senators boast of Indian blood in their veins: Hon. Charles Curtis, of Kansas, who is called the "whip of the

senate," is of the Sioux tribe and was born in a "tepee." Senator Robert L. Owen, of Oklahoma, is a Cherokee.

Through the modern educational advancement of these people our elders can proselyte among these native sons of America and deliver the message of the Book of Mormon and the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Indians can read and understand it; years ago they could not. With no written language it would have been difficult to explain the principles of the gospel, without a thorough knowledge of the Indian tongues.

When Elder Melvin J. Ballard visited the Ft. Peck and Blackfoot reservations he said he met many who knew him as soon as they saw him and asked for the "Book" which he was to bring them. They said they had seen him in dreams, bringing to them a "Book." When he handed them the Book of Mormon they adopted it gladly, and could read and understand it. He declared that it was his belief that one of the "Three Nephites" had been laboring among them for years teaching them the gospel and preparing them for our missionaries when they should come.

Branches of the Church have been organized among the Indians in various states, and some of the Indians have been ordained to the Aaronic and some to the Melchizedek Priesthood. Before being accepted as subjects for baptism all, both men and women, were required to keep faithfully the "Word of Wisdom," as they were strongly addicted to the use of tobacco, tea and coffee. In the winter time the Indians have little to do but to sit around the fire and chat and most of them are inveterate smokers. The promises thus exacted and given have been faithfully kept to date; a characteristic of this race of people.

It is a wonderful and providential thing that today these poor and undesirable tracts of land once so despised of white men are producing much of the wealth of the nation. On one reservation called the Rose Bud, an immense field of coal has been explored by Government experts and it has been found to contain the almost incomprehensible amount of forty-nine billion tons of coal in one body. Senator Smoot is laboring to protect the Indian rights in this district from unscrupulous speculators.

On another small reserve in Arizona a large tract of timber has grown up, making every man, woman and child on the reservation worth several thousand dollars per capita.

Then there are the wonderful oil wells being discovered and developed on Indian ground in Oklahoma and surrounding country. Many of the Cherokees and Osages are today millionaires, but are often not allowed to handle their money, because the Government does not consider them able to protect their own interests, so it is held for them in the federal reserve banks of the U. S. and the money is drawing compound interest. One of the big questions among capitalists in those regions today is, how are they going to prevent the

Indians from drawing out this immense wealth when the lease expires, which it will do in the year 1931.

When one reads the revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants given in 1832, concerning this subject, and notes the prevalence of failures throughout the country, no particular prophetic foresight is needed to see the dawning of wonderful events.

Indian lawyers are preparing to defend their rights. The Doctrine and Covenants says the Indians are to become the "battle axe" and will go forth as young lions among the flock, etc.

Then when the gospel light penetrates and warms their hearts, and a "nation is born in a day," we shall realize the fulfilment of the things spoken of. "Behold this is the blessing of the everlasting God upon the tribes of Israel, and the richer blessing upon the head of Ephraim and his fellows." (Doc. and Cov. 133.)

The last time President Lund addressed a genealogical convention he made this significant remark: "Do the brethren and sisters realize what a high privilege it is to be permitted to co-operate with the Savior in helping him to redeem his world?"

#### *Summary of Lamanite Temple Work Done to Date*

*Names recorded*—12,415. These have all been indexed on cards and filed. About 12,300 have been baptized, and about 4,000 endowed. Several hundred couples have been sealed, and some adoptions of children.

#### *Sources of Information*

*Utah Genealogical Library*—*New England Histories* containing early dealings with Indians.

*Public Library*—Charles Catlins' *Eight Years Among North American Indians*.

*Indian Books*: Property of Lamanite Genealogical Society: *Indian of Today*—By Eastman. *Case of New York Indians or Six Nations*—published by Society of Friends. *History of Ojibway Nation*—By Copway. *Indian Depredations in Utah*—By Gottfredson. *History of Mexico and History of Revolution (Mex.)* 2 Vols.

*Other Sources*: 218 names from President John M. Knight, North Dakota mission, Lamanite Church members; 418 names of Shivwitts tribe, Santa Clara, baptized by David H. Cannon and others in St. George in 1875. These were in lists, male and female, and were taken to the reservation by our agent Mrs. Martha Cox, of Richfield, accompanied by an interpreter (at her own expense) to consult the only survivors of these Indians, five in number, and to secure their services in arranging these names in pedigree form. About 250 names were sent by Mrs. Leola Thrall, Wisconsin, our agent there, appointed by Elder Melvin J. Ballard, of the Council of the Twelve.

Names sent from Mexican mission, Rey L. Pratt, president, from El Paso. At one time Margarito Bautista was appointed President of the Society, but he is now on a mission and the newly appointed board of officers are arranging to widen the scope and usefulness of the Society.

In order to avoid duplications and to keep the work properly systematized, a circular letter was sent to each of the temples advising

them of the organization, and that the Lamanite Genealogical stamp would be placed on all sheets and records passing through our hands.

The following temples have assisted with Temple work: Salt Lake, St. George, Laie, and Logan.

Family or connected pedigree work: Mexican, about 4,000.

Utah and Moapa Valley, about 900. North American Indians about 1,575.

The *Guide Lessons in Genealogy* have also been translated into Spanish for use in the Mexican mission.

All this has been accomplished almost without funds; the only revenue being contributions and yearly fees. Present membership, 129. Each member pays a fee of 50c and endows two names per annum. Our Genealogist and Recorder, having filled two missions among this people, one when a young girl of 19 years, to the City of Mexico, and another ten years later, has retained the missionary spirit towards them. Has given continuous service in their genealogical work, or five days a week for nearly four years, with car fare and other expenses, entirely without remuneration other than the joy of doing it.

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## An Indian Legend

The following Indian legend as told to N. A. Jensen, Mesa, Arizona, by an old Indian of the Pima tribe, Casa Grande, Arizona, 1922, is very significant viewed in the light of the Book of Mormon account of Christ's visit to the Nephites:

'Long, long time 'go heap big cloud come up east sky, no rain. Sun go down, no dark. Sun come up, shine behind cloud. Sun go down, 'gin, no dark. Big cloud make light. Sun come up 'gin. All my people heap 'fraid, fall on ground, no look up. Hear big noise behind cloud. People heap more 'fraid. Big tommyhawk in sky cut cloud open, no rain. People heap more 'fraid. Hear big song in sky, people look up, see white chief walk on cloud, sing fine song. Lot other white chiefs make big long ladder reach up cloud. Big white chief come down ladder. Indians all lay down face on ground. Big Chief take all Indian papooses up on cloud. Indians all cry, wash off war paint, break bows, take feathers off. Big white chief bring fine, white blankets, put on my people. Tell heap long story. Papooses eat up all chief's bread. Big chief make more bread, feed 'em all my people, heap full. Big chief make all my people wash in big water, make 'em white like Big Chief. Big Chief take 'em three Indian chiefs ride on cloud. No see 'em all day. Indian chiefs come back, heap white, like Big Chief. Big Chief sleep behind cloud. Some day wake 'em up, come down, stay with Indians, be Indian Big Chief, give 'em white blankets, heap big corn, no more fight.'

Mesa, Arizona

N. A. JENSEN