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Lesson XVII. Book of Mormon Prophecies - The Last Days

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Prophet himself. The two following paragraphs speak for themselves:

"Wherefore, at that day when the book shall be delivered unto the man of whom I have spoken, the book shall be hid from the eyes of the world, that the eyes of none shall behold it save it be that three witnesses shall behold it, by the power of God, besides him to whom the book shall be delivered; and they shall testify to the truth of the book and the things therein.

"And there is none other which shall view it, save it be a few according to the will of God, to bear testimony of his word unto the children of men: for the Lord God hath said, That the words of the faithful should speak as if it were from the dead." II Nephi 27:12, 13.

Consider in connection with these declarations II Nephi 11:3; Ether 5:2, 3, 4.

OUTLINE

Significance attached to the preservation of the Nephite records.

Predictions relative to the preservation and coming forth of the Book of Mormon record:

- A. Record to be hidden.
- B. To speak out of the dust.
- C. To be brought forth by one named Joseph.
- D. Not to be had for gain.
- E. The wisdom of a dual record.
- F. To corroborate the Bible.
- G. Sealed parts not to be translated by the Prophet Joseph.
- H. Records to be testified to.

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS.

1. Show how the keeping of records is significant in the progress of civilization.
2. Apply these truths to Nephite history.
3. Tell briefly the story of the preservation of the plates of Nephi.
4. Discuss fully each of the eight prophecies set down in this lesson.
5. Compare them with the predictions found in the twenty-ninth chapter of Isaiah.

LESSON XVII.

BOOK OF MORMON PROPHECIES.

(For Tuesday, March 15, or Sunday, March 27.)

THE LAST DAYS.

There are a few questions in which there is almost universal interest. The human mind likes to ponder questions that affect our ultimate destiny. We like to concern ourselves with such problems as Free Agency, Foreordination, the Resurrection, Salvation, Eternal Life, etc. As we come back to such questions there is perhaps no one to which we more frequently turn than to that of the Last Days. We inevitably speculate as to when we may expect "the books to close." When will the trump of judgment day be sounded? When shall God's purposes have been achieved?

Of course no one knows the specified year, or the exact hour for the culmination of this earth's history except the Lord, He Himself has so declared:

"I, the Lord God, have spoken it, but the hour and the day no man knoweth, neither the angels in heaven, nor shall they know until he comes." Doc. and Cov. Sec. 49:7.

But He has also declared that certain occurrences are to precede the end which may be taken as signs of His great second coming. Without being alarmists at all, let us turn to the Book of Mormon to see what signs have there been set down as heralding the approach of the millennium. Let us ponder the significance of events that make our own times so momentous—events which lead many of the world's greatest thinkers to declare that the end of the world seems to be drawing near.

At the outset it is of very great significance to note that the Lord has declared within the last one hundred years that His second coming is near at hand.

"Prepare ye, prepare ye for that which is to come, for the Lord is nigh." Doc. and Cov. Sec. 1:12.

"For the hour is nigh, and the day soon at hand when the earth is ripe; and all the proud, and they that do wickedly, shall be as stubble, and I will burn them up, saith the Lord of Hosts, that wickedness shall not be upon the earth;

"For the hour is nigh, and that which was spoken by mine apostles must be fulfilled; for as they spoke so shall it come to pass;

"For I will reveal myself from heaven with power and great glory, with all the hosts thereof, and dwell in righteousness with men on earth a thousand years, and the wicked shall not stand." Doc. and Cov. 29:9, 10, 11.

"Be faithful until I come, for I come quickly, and my reward is with me to recompense every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega. Amen. Doc. and Cov. 112:34.

He has further declared that the gospel as now restored is never to be thrown down nor given to another people and that the Priesthood has been given to men for the last time.

"For unto you, [the Twelve] and those [The First Presidency] who are appointed with you, to be your counselors and your leaders, is the power of this Priesthood given, for the last days and for the last time, in the which is the dispensation of the fulness of times." Doc. and Cov. 112:30.

In naming the events which are to precede this second coming, the Book of Mormon recognizes the predictions as given to John the Revelator as among the sure signs of the great event.

"And then shall my revelations which I have caused to be written by my servant John, be unfolded in the eyes of all the people. Remember, when ye see these things, ye shall know that the time is at hand that they shall be made manifest in very deed." Ether 4:16.

Read also in this connection I Nephi 14:18-28.

The reader who would know what John was privileged of the Lord to see relative to the last days should read the whole of the Book of Revela-

tion, particularly the last three chapters.

But in addition to naming the signs as recorded by John, the Book of Mormon itself is rich in its declarations relative to the latter days. In the first place it declares that as one of the signs announcing them, a "great and marvelous" work shall be established.

"For the time cometh, saith the Lamb of God, That I will work a great and a marvelous work among the children of men; a work which shall be everlasting, either on the one hand or on the other, either to the convincing of them unto peace and life eternal, or unto the deliverance of them to the hardness of their hearts and the blindness of their minds, unto their being brought down into captivity, and also into destruction, both temporally and spiritually, according to the captivity of the devil, of which I have spoken." I Nephi 14:7.

"And after our seed is scattered, the Lord God will proceed to do a marvelous work among the Gentiles, which shall be of great worth unto our seed; wherefore, it is likened unto their being nourished by the Gentiles and being carried in their arms and upon their shoulders. I Nephi 22:8.

"For in that day, for my sake shall the Father work a work, which shall be a great and marvelous work among them; and there shall be among them who will not believe it, although a man shall declare it unto them." III Nephi 21:9.

"For behold, I am God; and I am a God of miracles; and I will shew unto the world that I am the same yesterday, today, and forever; and I work not among the children of men, save it be according to their faith.

"And again it shall come to pass, that the Lord shall say unto him that shall read the words that shall be delivered him,

"Forasmuch as this people draw near unto me with their mouth, and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their hearts far from me, and their fear towards me is taught by the precepts of man,

"Therefore, I will proceed to do a marvelous work among this people, yea, a marvelous work and a wonder; for the wisdom of their wise and learned shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent shall be hid." II Nephi 27:23-26.

How literally did the Lord announce the fulfillment of verse twenty-five just quoted in the answer given to Joseph Smith's first prayer! And what a fulfillment of this whole promise in the establishment of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints! Not only was the Church to be organized but its plan of salvation, the gospel, was to be preached in all the world.

"And it shall come to pass that the Lord God shall commence his work, among all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people, to bring about the restoration of his people upon the earth." II Nephi 30:8.

How like Matthew 24:14, this passage reads:

"And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."

That this part of the prediction is being fulfilled is evidenced by the fact that to date our missionaries have carried the gospel message into the following countries:

Mexico.	Japan.
United States.	South Africa.
Canada.	Great Britain.
Hawaiian Islands.	Netherlands.
Samoa.	Switzerland.
Tonga.	Germany.
Tahitian Islands.	Denmark.
Australia.	Sweden.
New Zealand.	Norway.

A further sign of the approach of the Last Days is found in the declaration in III Nephi 25:5, 6.

"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord;

"And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." III Nephi 25:5, 6.

That Elijah has appeared is testified to in the Doctrine and Covenants 110:13-16. And for a fuller statement of the purpose of his ap-

pearance turn to Section 128:18. That this prediction is being fulfilled is born out in the wonderful work of redemption being carried on in the temples dedicated to that purpose.

The preceding lesson detailed the gathering of the Jews to their native land, Palestine. Not only is that event interesting in itself as a fulfillment of prophecy—it is a forerunner of the coming in glory of the Son of man. Jerusalem is to be rebuilt that the Savior may there once more come to His own.

(Turn to the passages listed under Lesson XVI.)

Not only is Jerusalem to be restored but a new Jerusalem is to be built on this continent as a sign of the second coming.

"And they shall assist my people, the remnant of Jacob, and also, as many of the house of Israel as shall come, that they may build a city which shall be called the New Jerusalem.

"And then shall they assist my people that they may be gathered in, who are scattered upon all the face of the land, in unto the New Jerusalem.

"And then shall the power of heaven come down among them; and I also will be in the midst.

"And then shall the work of the Father commence at that day, even when this gospel shall be preached among the remnant of this people. Verily, I say unto you, at that day shall the work of the Father commence among all the dispersed of my people; yea, even the tribes which have been lost, which the Father hath led away out of Jerusalem." III Nephi 21:23-26.

"For behold, they rejected all the words of Ether; for he truly told them of all things, from the beginning of man; and that after the waters had receded from off the face of this land, it became a choice land above all other lands, a chosen land of the Lord; wherefore the Lord would have that all men should serve him who dwell upon the face thereof.

"And that it was the place of the New Jerusalem which should come down out of heaven, and the Holy Sanctuary of the Lord.

"Behold, Ether saw the days of Christ,

and he spake concerning a New Jerusalem upon this land.

"And he spake also concerning the house of Israel, and the Jerusalem from whence Lehi should come; after it should be destroyed, it should be built up again a holy city unto the Lord, wherefore it could not be a New Jerusalem, for it had been in a time of old, but it should be built up again, and become a holy city of the Lord; and it should be built unto the house of Israel.

"And that a New Jerusalem should be built up upon this land, unto the remnant of the seed of Joseph, for which things there has been a type.

"For as Joseph brought his father down into the land of Egypt, even so he died there; wherefore the Lord brought a remnant of the seed of Joseph out of the land of Jerusalem, that he might be merciful unto the seed of Joseph, that they should perish not, even as he was merciful unto the father of Joseph, that he should perish not.

"Wherefore the remnant of the house of Joseph shall be built upon this land; and it shall be a land of their inheritance; and they shall build up a holy city unto the Lord, like unto the Jerusalem of old; and they shall no more be confounded, until the end come, when the earth shall pass away.

"And there shall be a new heaven and a new earth; and they shall be like unto the old, save the old have passed away, and all things have become new.

"And then cometh the New Jerusalem; and blessed are they who dwell therein, for it is they whose garments are white through the blood of the Lamb; and they are they who are numbered among the remnant of the seed of Joseph, who were of the house of Israel." *Ether 13:2-10.*

Every zealous Latter-day Saint looks forward to the time when this New Jerusalem shall be built and the Saints shall return to it in Jackson County, Missouri, to prepare for the coming of the Master. The place has already been designated and the site of the temple located.

"Hearken, O ye elders of my church, saith the Lord your God, who have assembled yourselves together, according to my commandments, in this land, which is the land of Missouri, which is the land which I have appointed and consecrated for the gathering of the Saints.

"Wherefore this is the land of promise, and the place for the city of Zion." *Doc. and Cov. Sec. 57:1, 2.*

A final Book of Mormon sign heralding the approach of the Last Days is the utter wickedness which shall possess the hearts of men. In these days following a most calamitous war—a war which involved 60,000,000 men and exacted a death toll of 16,000,000, including civilian deaths, together with a host wounded to the number of 18,000,000—surely wickedness is rife. Every newspaper in this and every other land proclaims in each succeeding issue the ravages of crime and wickedness. Surely the world seems to be ripening in iniquity. Witness the immorality of Europe, to say nothing of the crimes that attended the recent world war. All this is in keeping with Book of Mormon prophecies. The passages are too long to be set down here but such references as II Nephi 27:1-22 and III Nephi 21 should be read and pondered. Events of the last three years make it very easy to believe that all which is there set down might easily come to pass. It appears certain that the future holds calamities far beyond those already experienced. But there is consolation in the promise to those who serve the Lord in righteousness that they shall find peace in Zion where they shall be preserved to attend the glorious coming of the Master.

OUTLINE

The last days a question of universal interest.

Exact date of the Savior's second coming not known.

Declarations from the Doctrine and Covenants that the event is near at hand.

Recognitions of John's predictions.

Book of Mormon prophecies;

A. A great and marvelous work to come forth.

B. Gospel to be preached in all the world.

- C. Elijah to visit the earth.
- D. The Jews to be gathered home.
- E. A New Jerusalem to be built upon this continent.
- F. Wickedness is to hold sway in the earth.

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS.

1. Why are Latter-day Saints particularly concerned about the last days?
2. Have a member of the class report on the significant latter-day events as revealed to John the Revelator.
3. Quote Bible references showing that

the exact date of the second coming is unknown.

4. Discuss the significance of this being the last dispensation—the dispensation of the fulness of times.

5. Discuss each of the six signs as set down in this lesson.

6. Compare these Book of Mormon declarations with the following ones from the Bible:

Micah 4:1, 2; Isaiah 2:2, 3; Isaiah 33:15-17; Isaiah 18:1-3; Isaiah 35:4; Malachi 3:1; Mark 13:26; Hebrews 9:28; Acts 1:10, 11; Luke 21:10-27; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; Revelation 21.

Vital Problems of Life.

Advanced Senior Course of Study.

LESSON XVI.

THE PULL OF PREJUDICE.

I. DEFINITIONS. (1) Prejudice is the acceptance of inadequate or inaccurate information as a basis of judgment. It is the undeliberate making up of one's mind; it is the unreasoned element of conclusion.

(2) The *Pull of Prejudice* is the influence the judgment has upon the mind in the curtailment of its freedom to accept and weigh evidence that might conflict with the preconceived judgment.

II. SOME THINGS THAT THE PULL OF PREJUDICE DOES. (1) The Pull of Prejudice shuts off the desire for wider experience.

A lady visiting Salt Lake with her son, just graduated from high school, met the remark of the guide on the Temple block, to the effect that the youth was patriotic to California, with the retort, "Entirely too patriotic."

Then the mother told the guide that she was very proud of her son's record in high school and for that

reason had made up her mind to give him a trip to her old home, in the South. The boy came home with his diploma, and with great pride placed it in his mother's hand. The mother received it with delight, remarking to her son that because of his very excellent record, she had decided to give him a trip to the home of his grandparents. She expected an exclamation of joy to follow this announcement, but very much to her astonishment the boy hung his head, and went quietly out of the door. She knew something was wrong, but could not tell what. An hour later the lad returned and, placing his arms sympathetically about his mother's neck, said:

"Mama, when California is the best place in the whole world what is the good of going anywhere else?"

(2) The Pull of Prejudice closes the doors against fair and accurate observation.

A prominent educator stood at the