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Chapter XIV

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Abstract: The Bondage of the People of Limhi—An Expedition North—Finding of the Jaredite Records—The Arrival of Ammon—The People of Limhi Escape—The Pursuit—The Amulonites—The People of Alma—They are Brought into Bondage—Their Deliverance



CHAPTER XIV.

THE BONDAGE OF THE PEOPLE OF LIMHI—AN EXPEDITION NORTH—FINDING OF THE JAREDITE RECORDS—THE ARRIVAL OF AMMON—THE PEOPLE OF LIMHI ESCAPE—THE PURSUIT—THE AMULONITES—THE PEOPLE OF ALMA—THEY ARE BROUGHT INTO BONDAGE—THEIR DELIVERANCE.

AFTER A TIME the Lord softened the hearts of the Lamanites so that they began to ease the burdens of their slaves, but he did not deliver the Nephites out of bondage at once. They, however, gradually prospered, and raised more grain, flocks and herds, so that they did not suffer with hunger.

The people of Limhi kept together as much as possible for protection. Even the king did not trust himself outside the walls of the city without his guards, lest he might fall into the hands of the Lamanites.

In this sad condition of bondage and serfdom the people of Limhi had one hope. It was to communicate with their Nephite friends in the land of Zarahemla. To this end Limhi secretly fitted out an expedition consisting of a small number of men. This company became lost in the wilderness, and traveled a long distance northward until they found a land covered with the dry bones of men who appeared to have fallen in

battle. Limhi's people thought this must be the land of Zarahemla and that their Nephite brethren who dwelt there had been destroyed. But in this they were wrong, for they found with the dead some records engraved on plates of ore, which, when afterwards translated by the power of God, shewed that these bones were those of some of the Jaredites who had been slain in war.

They missed the land of Zarahemla, having probably traveled to the west of it and passed northward through the Isthmus of Panama.

Shortly after this a small company numbering sixteen men reached them from Zarahemla. Their leader's name was Ammon. He had been sent by king Mosiah to the land of Nephi to find out what had become of the people or their descendants who left with Zeniff. When Ammon and those that were with him reached Lehi-Nephi, king Limhi happened to be without the walls of the city, and his guards fancying that Ammon and his friends were some of the priests of Noah took them and put them in prison. The next day the mistake was discovered, and Limhi and his people were overjoyed to hear from their friends. Soon plans were laid to effect the escape of the enslaved Nephites, which, under the guidance of Limhi, Ammon and Gideon, was successfully accomplished. The Lamanite guards were made drowsy with a large present of wine, and while they were in this drunken stupor, the people of Limhi escaped through an unfrequented pass, taking with them such things as they could safely carry away. They were then led by Ammon to Zarahemla.

When the Lamanites found, to their great surprise,



DISCOVERY OF THE RECORDS OF THE JAREDITES.

that their bond servants had escaped, they sent an army after them. It so happened that this corps lost themselves in the wilderness. Whilst traveling hither and thither, not knowing which way to go, they came across the priests of king Noah, who had fled from the face of their fellows to escape the just indignation their continued iniquities had aroused. These priests, at the instigation of Amulon, their leader, joined the Lamanite troops, and unitedly endeavored to get back to the land of Nephi. Whilst thus engaged, they wandered near the city of Helam.

When the people of Alma first perceived the approach of this body of men, they were engaged tilling the soil around their city, into which they immediately fled in great fear. In this perilous hour the faith and courage of Alma were conspicuous. He gathered his people around him, called upon them to cast aside their unsaintly fears, and to remember the God who had ever delivered those who trusted in him. The words of their leader had the desired effect; the people silenced their fears and called mightily upon the Lord to soften the hearts of the Lamanites that they might spare their lives and those of their wives and little ones. Then, with the assurance in their hearts that God would hearken unto their prayers, Alma and his brethren went forth out of their city and delivered themselves up to their former foes.

The Lamanites were in a dilemma, therefore they were profuse in promises. They were willing to grant the people of Helam their lives and liberty if they would show them the way to the land of Nephi. Having obtained this information and reached home in safety, they broke their promises and made Amulon

the king over a wide district of country, including the land of Helam.

Alma and Amulon had known each other in the days when they both belonged to king Noah's priesthood, and with the venom so often conspicuous in apostates, the latter soon commenced to persecute those who were faithful to the Lord. He placed task-masters over them, imposed inhuman burdens upon them, and otherwise afflicted them grievously.

In their agony they called continually upon the Lord for deliverance. Their prayers annoyed their cruel masters and they were forbidden to pray aloud; but no tyrants, however powerful or cruel, could prevent them praying in their hearts. This the people of Alma continued to do most fervently, and in due time, though not immediately, deliverance came. In the meanwhile the Lord comforted and strengthened them in their afflictions, so that their burdens were easily borne.

The time of their deliverance finally came, for on a certain day the Lord promised them that he would deliver them on the morrow. The night was occupied in getting their flocks and provisions together, and preparing for their journey. In the morning, when their Lamanite guards and taskmasters were in a deep sleep, they set out on their journey into the wilderness. After traveling all day they pitched their tents in a valley which they named Alma. The Lord warned Alma to hasten out of this country, for the Lamanites were in pursuit, but he said he would stop them in the valley where Alma was then camped. Alma and his company traveled yet twelve days, at the end of which time they arrived in Zarahemla. This, with the eight days occupied in traveling from the waters of Mormon

to the land of Helam, makes twenty days' travel from Lehi-Nephi to Zarahemla.

To prevent confusion in the minds of our readers we desire to draw attention to the fact that the city of Lehi-Nephi and the city of Nephi are not two separate cities, but one and the same city with two names.

Amulon and the priests of Noah, possibly because of their Lamanitish wives, soon gained great favor with king Laman and were made teachers to his people. Educated in the language of the Nephites, they began to instruct the Lamanites therein.

They taught the people nothing of the religion of their fathers, or of the law of Moses, but instructed them how to keep their records, and to write one to another. All this time king Laman ruled over a numerous people, inhabiting distant regions, governed by tributary kings and rulers. Having no written standard, the language of the Lamanites had become greatly corrupted. The coming of the priests of Noah among them gave rise to the introduction of a higher civilization. As a result, they increased in wealth, and trade and commerce extended among them. They became cunning and wise, and therefore powerful, but were still addicted to robbery and plunder, except among themselves.

