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Chapter XXI

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Abstract: The King Issues a Proclamation—The Results of the Labors of the Sons of Mosiah—The People of Anti-Nephi-Lehi—They Bury their Weapons of War—Are Massacred by the Thousand—They Remove to the Territory of the Nephites, who give them the Land of Jershon

CHAPTER XXI.

THE KING ISSUES A PROCLAMATION—THE RESULTS OF THE LABORS OF THE SONS OF MOSIAH—THE PEOPLE OF ANTI-NEPHI-LEHI—THEY BURY THEIR WEAPONS OF WAR—ARE MASSACRED BY THE THOUSAND—THEY REMOVE TO THE TERRITORY OF THE NEPHITES, WHO GIVE THEM THE LAND OF JERSHON.

AFTER THE king was converted he sent a proclamation throughout the land forbidding any and all from persecuting Ammon and his fellow-missionaries, giving them liberty to preach anywhere and everywhere that they desired. Our readers may be sure that this privilege was not neglected. To use Ammon's own words, the missionaries entered into their houses and taught them; they taught them in their temples and synagogues, in the open streets and on the lofty hills. But often they were cast out, spit upon, smitten, stoned, bound, cast into prison and made to suffer all manner of afflictions, from which the Lord, in his mercy, delivered them and from which the king's proclamation afterward protected them. Nor was the result of their labors trifling, but glorious in the saving of many thousand souls; for unto the Lord were converted the people of the Lamanites who dwelt in the lands of Ishmael, Middoni, Shilom and Shemlon, and in the cities of Nephi, Lemmel and Shimmilon; and they became a righteous, peaceful, God-serving people, and from faithful obedience to his law they never fell away. But the various bodies of Nephite apostates who dwelt among the Lamanites universally rejected the gospel message, with the exception of one single Amalekite,

and of what ultimately became of him we have no record.

History often repeats itself, but we have no recollection of any parallel to the events that followed this marvelous conversion. The Lamanite people now became two as distinct and separate bodies as they and the Nephites had beforetimes been. But with this strange complication, the apostate Nephites now occupied the place and did the work of the natural Lamanites, while the true descendants of Laman and Lemuel took the ground previously held by the righteous Nephites. So clearly defined did the division become that the supreme ruler (Lamoni's father), having turned from the traditions, habits and customs of the Lamanites, was determined to also cast aside the old name. If they were Lamanites in name alone they would cut that weak cord which alone held them to the past, and be as new in name as they were in feelings, hopes, loyalty and religion. So, after advising with Ammon and his fellow missionaries, he gave to his people the name of Anti-Nephi-Lehies, and to his son, to whom he transferred the royal power, that of Anti-Nephi-Lehi.

The renegade Amalekites, Amulonites and others were not willing to be ruled by a Christian monarch. They had rejected Christianity altogether, and would not have it as the ruling power, either in Nephi or Zarahemla. With the old sophistries and falsehoods they raised a mutiny in the hearts of their associate Lamanites and urged them on to rebellion against the rightful king and his believing subjects. But the converted Lamanites made no preparations to resist them; they felt that in times past with unholy hands they had spilt blood as water on the land; blood that they

could never atone for, but they would do it no more. Passive non-resistance for the future should be their policy, but the blood of a fellow-being they would never again shed, no matter how great the peril, how intense the aggravation. As a witness of the completeness of this resolve, they took their weapons of war and buried them deep in the earth with an oath and covenant that they would never dig them up again. When the maddened hosts of their embittered brethren rushed upon them, they came forth unarmed, bowed down before their assailants, and submitted to their fate. With them to live was Christ, to die was salvation. The vengeful Nephite apostates led the inglorious charge and shed most of the blood that flowed that day, when one thousand and five unresisting martyrs glorified the Lamanite race by the tribute of their lives to God and the truth. A thousand ransomed souls, washed white in the blood of the Lamb, that day entered the gates of heaven to stand amongst the saviors on Mount Zion in the great day of the redeemed. Nor was there joy alone in that bright world beyond, but on earth the church was gladdened by fresh accessions to the cause. When many of the actual Lamanites witnessed the great change that had taken place in their brethren, that they would quietly, peacefully, joyously lay down their lives, their consciences smote them; they stayed their hands, and rose in tumult against their Amalekite leaders, and would no longer be the murderers of their kin. The blood of the martyrs was indeed the seed of the church, for there were more added to the fold of Christ on that memorable day than those who passed away to the presence of their God.

Foiled in their attempt to destroy the Anti-Nephi-

Lehies (or Ammonites as we shall hereafter call them), the bloodthirsty Lamanites, led as usual by Nephite apostates, made a sudden incursion into the land of Zarahemla, and, in fulfilment of Alma's prophecies, destroyed the great city of Ammonihah, of which we shall say more hereafter, but met with most disastrous defeat later on in the campaign. Still vowing vengeance they returned to their own lands, and feeling that the Ammonites were in sympathy with the Nephites, they satisfied their hatred by again slaughtering many of these unresisting people, who, as before, permitted themselves to be slain without making the first effort at defense. But Ammon and his brethren were not willing to have the disciples continually harassed and eventually exterminated; they judged that the Lord having so thoroughly tried the faith of this devoted people, would provide some way of escape.

Ammon counseled with the king and it was thought it would be better to forsake their all so far as worldly possessions were concerned, than to sacrifice their lives. But first let them inquire of the Lord. Ammon did so and the Lord said, Get this people out of this land, that they perish not, for Satan has great hold of the hearts of the Amalekites who do stir up the Lamanites to anger against their brethren to slay them; therefore get thee out of this land; and blessed are the people of this generation for I will preserve them.

The word of the Lord thus received was joyfully obeyed. The Ammonites gathered up their flocks and their herds and departed into the wilderness that lay between the lands of Nephi and Zarahemla. There they rested whilst Ammon and his brethren went forward and treated with the Nephites in behalf of the

persecuted hosts they had left behind. The people, by united voice, gladly welcomed their co-religionists and set apart the land of Jershon as their inheritance. Thither the Ammonites with happy feet repaired, and there they dwelt until the breaking out of war made it desirable that they should remove to the land of Melek, and many thousands in after years emigrated to the land north. Of their future history we shall speak, from time to time, when it connects with that of the Nephites.

CHAPTER XXII.

REVIEW OF THE MISSION OF THE SONS OF MOSIAH—ITS IMPORTANCE AND GREAT LENGTH—ITS RESULTS TO BOTH RACES—THE DATES OF ITS LEADING OCCURRENCES.

SO FAR as we can gather from the records, the great mission of Ammon and his brethren to the Lamanites was productive of results new to the history of the Nephites. On many previous occasions dissenters from the latter had gone over to the Lamanites, until that nation consisted of a mixed race. But the Nephite people appear to have been, almost without exception, the literal descendants of the first founders of the monarchy, Nephi, Sam, Jacob, Joseph and Zoram, and of the people of Zarahemla. But now a large body of Lamanites was incorporated in the Nephite nation and became partakers of the liberties accorded to all other citizens. As the history of the two nations proceeds,