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Chapter XXXIX

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Abstract: Samuel, the Lamanite—His Mission and Prophecies—The Vain Attempt to Destroy Him—He Returns to His Own Country

tion would seethe, the vile would snatch the reins of government, the good would be oppressed, and contention and war, with all their horrors, would again reign supreme. Thus it was after the three years of famine. For two years there was peace, in the third there began to be much strife (B. C. 13), in the next, the Gadianton bands reappeared, and carried havoc amongst their more peaceable fellow-countrymen. Going on, year by year they grew in iniquity and ripened for destruction. For many years Nephi strove to stem the tide of vice. At times partial success rewarded his unceasing efforts, and he had joy in the baptism of some honest souls. But the great bulk of the people had rejected the gospel, they had no love for its holy principles, and were unfit for its blessings.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

SAMUEL THE LAMANITE—HIS MISSION AND PROPHECIES—
THE VAIN ATTEMPT TO DESTROY HIM—HE RETURNS
TO HIS OWN COUNTRY.

WE COME now to the days of Samuel the Lamanite (B. C. 6). Without any previous reference to him, he appears suddenly in the foreground of ancient American history, bearing a weighty and solemn message; a messenger of God's displeasure, he stands a Jonah to the Nephites. That message is faithfully delivered; then he disappears forever from our sight.

The condition of society in the days of Samuel

was somewhat peculiar. The Nephites and Lamanites had, so far as righteousness is concerned, to a great extent changed places. The former were puffed up with worldly pride, were full of vain boastings, envyings, strifes, malice, persecutions, murders and all manner of iniquities. They cast out, they stoned, they slew the servants of God, while they encouraged, exalted and rewarded the false teachers who flattered them in their vileness and sung in their ears the siren's song of "all is well." They reveled in all the luxury that the fatness of the land brought forth; they were ostentatious in the use of gold and silver and precious things; but their hearts never turned in thankfulness to the great Giver of all these bounties. The majority of the Lamanites, on the contrary, walked circumspectly before God; they were full of faith and integrity, were zealous in the work of converting their fellows, and kept the commandments, statutes and judgments of the Lord according to the law of Moses.

Such was the condition of affairs when the Lamanite prophet Samnel appeared among the sin-stained citizens of Zarahemla, and for many days preached repentance in their midst. Their eyes were blind and their ears were deaf, sin filled their souls, and in their anger they cast him out. But the work of his mission was not yet accomplished. As he was preparing to return to his own country, a holy angel visited him and proclaimed the voice of the Lord. That voice commanded that he should turn back and prophesy to the people of Zarahemla the things that should come into his heart.

He returned to the city, but was refused admission at its gates. The iniquitous dwellers therein had no

desire to have their peace disturbed by the voice of divine threatenings. But the prophet had the word of the Lord burning within him, and could not be restrained. He mounted the walls of the city, and from this conspicuous vantage ground, with outstretched hands and loud voice, he proclaimed to the wicked the unwelcome tidings of their coming destruction. Many listened to his proclamation, some few were pricked in their hearts, repented of their evil deeds, and sought the prophet Nephi, that they might be baptized. Others were angry, they gathered up the stones in the roadway and hurled them at Samuel; they drew forth their bows and shot arrows at him. But to no effect; the protecting power of the Holy Spirit was around him, and he could not be harmed.

When some beheld how wonderfully the prophet was preserved, it was a testimony to them that God was with him, and they also sought Nephi, confessing their sins. But the great body of the populace grew more enraged at the want of success that attended their murderous efforts. They called upon their captains to seize and bind him. They cried out, He hath a devil, and it is by this power he is preserved; take the fellow, bind him, and away with him! Following the wild satanic cry of the multitude, the officers of the law endeavored to arrest Samuel. But he cast himself down from the wall of the city and fled out of the lands of the Nephites into his own country. There he preached and prophesied among his own people; but amongst the people of Nephi he was never heard of more.

The prophecies of Samuel are amongst the most wonderful recorded in holy writ. He especially foretold many things regarding the life and death of our

Savior, and concerning the future destiny of his people, and of the Nephites.

With regard to the birth of the Redeemer he said:

Behold, I give unto you a sign; for five years more cometh, and behold, then cometh the Son of God, to redeem all those who shall believe on his name.

And behold, this will I give unto you for a sign at the time of his coming; for behold, there shall be great lights in heaven, insomuch that in the night before he cometh there shall be no darkness, insomuch that it shall appear unto man as if it was day.

Therefore there shall be one day and a night, and a day, as if it were one day, and there were no night; and this shall be unto you for a sign; for ye shall know of the rising of the sun, and also of its setting; therefore they shall know of a surety that there shall be two days and a night; nevertheless the night shall not be darkened; and it shall be the night before he is born.

And behold there shall a new star arise, such an one as ye never have beheld; and this also shall be a sign unto you.

And behold this is not all, there shall be many signs and wonders in heaven.

And it shall come to pass that ye shall all be amazed and wonder, insomuch that ye shall fall to the earth.

Regarding the death of the Lord Jesus he declared:

But behold, as I said unto you concerning another sign, a sign of his death, behold, in that day that he shall suffer death, the sun shall be darkened and refuse to give his light unto you; and also the moon, and the stars; and there shall be no light upon the face of this

land, even from the time that he shall suffer death, for the space of three days, to the time that he shall rise again from the dead.

Yea, at the time that he shall yield up the ghost, there shall be thunderings and lightnings for the space of many hours, and the earth shall shake and tremble, and the rocks which are upon the face of this earth; which are both above the earth and beneath, which ye know at this time are solid, or the more part of it is one solid mass, shall be broken up;

Yea, they shall be rent in twain, and shall ever after be found in seams and in cracks, and in broken fragments upon the face of the whole earth; yea, both above the earth and beneath.

And behold there shall be great tempests, and there shall be many mountains laid low, like unto a valley, and there shall be many places, which are now called valleys, which shall become mountains, whose height thereof is great.

And many highways shall be broken up, and many cities shall become desolate.

And many graves shall be opened, and shall yield up many of their dead; and many saints shall appear unto many.

And behold thus hath the angel spoken unto me; for he said unto me, that there should be thunderings and lightnings for the space of many hours:

And he said unto me that while the thunder and the lightning lasted, and the tempest, that these things should be, and that darkness should cover the face of the whole earth for the space of three days.

And the angel said unto me, that many shall see greater things than these, to the intent that they

might believe that these signs and these wonders should come to pass, upon all the face of this land; to the intent that there should be no cause of unbelief among the children of men;

We shall see as we proceed how wonderfully all these sayings of Samuel the Lamanite were fulfilled.

He closed his prophecy with these emphatic words. First regarding the Lamanites:

Therefore, saith the Lord, I will not utterly destroy them; but I will cause that in the day of my wisdom they shall return again unto me, saith the Lord.

And now behold, saith the Lord, concerning the the people of the Nephites, if they will not repent and observe to do my will, I will utterly destroy them, saith the Lord, because of their unbelief, notwithstanding the many mighty works which I have done among them; and as surely as the Lord liveth shall these things be, saith the Lord.

CHAPTER XL.

NEPHI TRANSLATED—HIS SON NEPHI—TIME OF THE SAVIOR'S COMING—THE CONSPIRACY TO SLAY THE BELIEVERS—THE REVELATION TO NEPHI—THE PROMISED SIGNS APPEAR—INCREASE OF THE GADIANTON ROBBERS—WAR—LACHONEUS GATHERS ALL THE PEOPLE TO ONE LAND—THE END OF THE STRUGGLE.

SHORTLY before the birth of Christ, Nephi transferred the plates of brass and other records to his son Nephi, gave him charge concerning them, and departed from the land of Zarahemla. Whither he went, or what became of him, is hidden from the knowl-