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Chapter LII

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Abstract: The Long Continued Era of Peace and Righteousness—Death of Nephi—His Son Amos—Amos the Second

CHAPTER LII.

THE LONG CONTINUED ERA OF PEACE AND RIGHTEOUSNESS—DEATH OF NEPHI—HIS SON AMOS—AMOS THE SECOND.

WHEN JESUS left the Nephites to the care of his disciples, he had so thoroughly filled the people with the influences and powers of the eternal worlds that evil utterly ceased in their midst; they were united in all things temporal and spiritual. Universal peace prevailed. Love, joy, harmony, everything desirable to make the life of man a perfect condition of unalloyed, holy happiness reigned supreme. Indeed, it may be said that a type, a foreshadowing of the millennium for once found place and foothold among the erring sons of humanity.

At this blessed period Nephi, the son of Nephi, received the sacred plates. His duty, as the recorder of the doings of his people, was a most happy one; he had nothing but good to relate of their lives and actions, and to record that perfect peace prevailed on all the vast continent. The Nephites increased in numbers (Lamanites there were none), they prospered in circumstances, they grew in material wealth, all of which was held in common, according to the order of God. They colonized and spread far abroad; they rebuilt their ancient capital and many other cities; they also founded many new ones. Above all, they were rich in heavenly treasures; the Holy Spirit reigned in every heart and illumined every soul.

When Nephi died (A. C. 110) this inexpressibly happy, heavenly state still continued in undiminished

warmth of divine and brotherly love and strength of abiding faith. All the generation to which Nephi belonged entered in at the straight gate, and walked the narrow way to the eternal city of God; not one of them was lost.

At Nephi's death his son Amos became the custodian of the holy things; and he held them for eighty four years (from A. C. 110 to A. C. 194). He lived in the days of the Nephites' greatest prosperity and happiness. The perfect law of righteousness was still their only guide. But before he passed away to his heavenly home, a small cloud had appeared upon the horizon, fatal harbinger of the approaching devastating hurricane. A few, weary of the uninterrupted bliss, the perfect harmony, the universal love that everywhere prevailed, seceded from the church and took upon them the title of Lamanites, which ill-boding name had only been known to the Nephites by tradition for more than one hundred years. It may be asked, how it was possible that men and women should withdraw from such a holy order of society, where all was perfect peace, where every man dealt justly with his neighbor, where none inflicted wrongs and none suffered from injustice done them—where angels ministered to the children of mortality, and heavenly revelations were their constant guides? If the inquirer will answer why Lucifer, the son of the morning, in heaven itself, rebelled against the Almighty Father, and led astray one-third of the angelic hosts, we will reply by saying that he, Satan, tempted the dissenting Nephites with this same spirit of rebellion to the divine power, and he succeeded in ensnaring them and leading them away captive to his will.

A second Amos succeeded his father as the keeper of the records. His duties were not the happy ones of his immediate predecessors. Instead of good he had to chronicle much evil.

Amos himself was a righteous man, but he lived to witness an ever increasing flood of iniquity break over the land, a phase of evil-doing that arose not from ignorance and false tradition, but from direct and wilful rebellion against God, and apostasy from his laws. The wholesome checks to vice and misery found in the plan of salvation were knowingly and intentionally removed or done away; the voice of reason was disregarded; the promptings of the Holy Spirit were defiantly repelled; men's unbridled passions again bore sway; disunion, dissension, violence, hatred, distress, dismay, bloodshed and havoc spread the wide continents over; and from their high pinnacle of righteousness, peace, happiness, refinement, social advantage, etc., the people were hurled once more into an abyss of misery and barbarism, now more profound, more torturing, and more degraded than ever.





THE THREE NEPHITES AND WILD BEASTS.