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Chapter LXX

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Abstract: The Lands of the Nephites, Continued—Zarahemla—Jershon—Antionum—Manti—Gideon

ing from Ishmael towards Middoni they met Lamoni's father, the head king of all the land, coming from Nephi. This leads to the conclusion that the same road from Ishmael led to both Nephi and Middoni.

Nephi is called *np* from both these lands; we, therefore, suggest that, like Ishmael, Middoni occupied a portion of the lower lands on the eastern borders of the Andes, but somewhat nearer the capital city.

CHAPTER LXX.

THE LANDS OF THE NEPHITES, CONTINUED—ZARAHENLA—
JERSHON—ANTIONUM—MANTI—GIDEON.

AS THERE were two lands of Nephi, the greater and the lesser, so, for exactly the same reason, there were two lands of Zarahemla; the one occupying the whole of South America, from the great wilderness, which formed its southern border, northward to the land Bountiful; the other, the district immediately surrounding the capital city.

That there was a Zarahemla within Zarahemla is shown by various passages in which persons are spoken of as journeying to the land of Zarahemla, when they were already within the borders of the greater land of that name. For instance, Minon, on the river Sidon, is said to have been situated above the land of Zarahemla (*Alma ii. 24*); again, Alma took Annulek and came over to the land of Zarahemla from Sidon (*Alma xv. 18*). While in many other places, notably where the boundaries of the possessions of the Nephites are

given, the name Zarahemla is applied to the whole of the lands of that people, even sometimes including Bountiful, which is generally spoken of separately.

In the days of the first Mosiah and his son, king Benjamin, the greater portion of the Nephites appear to have been located in and immediately around the city of Zarahemla. King Benjamin, when about to resign the royal authority into the hands of his son Mosiah, commanded him to gather his people together, For, he adds, on the morrow I shall proclaim unto this my people out of mine own mouth, that thou art a king and a ruler over this people (*Mosiah i. 10*). The proclamation was sent forth and the people were gathered in an unnumbered host; a thing that could not have been done in so short a time had their habitations been widely scattered over an extended territory.

In the reign of the younger Mosiah, the people stretched out in all directions, and colonies were planted in distant regions. This vigorous policy was continued, only on a much larger scale, during the days of the Judges.

After carefully perusing the Book of Mormon, we suggest that the lands or cities (which in Nephite geography appear to be frequently used interchangeably, or one for the other), included within the borders of the Nephites, in the days of the Judges, were:

In the extreme north, the land of Bountiful, which extended southward from the Isthmus of Panama. On its southern frontier lay the land of Jershon.

On the River Sidon: Zarahemla, Minon, Gideon and Manti.

In the interior, eastward of the Sidon: Antionum, Siron, and probably Nephihah.

On the shores of the Atlantic Ocean and Caribbean Sea: Mulek, Moreanton, Lehi, Ommer, Gid, Aaron and Moroni.

In the interior, west of the Sidon: Melek, Noah, Ammonihah and Sidon.

Between the upper waters of the Sidon and the Pacific Ocean, or in the extreme southwest: Cumeni, Antiparah, Judea and Zeezrom.

Besides the above the following cities are mentioned, but only in connection with their destruction at the time of the terrible convulsions that marked the sacrifice at Jerusalem, of the world's Redeemer:

The great city of Moronihah, covered with earth.

Laman, Gad, Josh and Kishkumen, burned with fire.

Gilgal, Gadiandi, Gadiomah, Jacob and Gim-gimmo, sunk in the depths of the earth; and

Onihah and Mocum, in whose place waters came up.

We imagine from the names, that some of the above were built by the Lamanites or Gadianton robbers. But this is simply a conjecture, as the sacred record is entirely silent on the point.

We will now very briefly examine, one by one, some of the more important divisions of the country.

JERSHON.—This was the name given to the regions set apart by the Nephites (B. C. 78), as the home of the Ammonites, or Christian Lamanites. It was situated far to the north, and was evidently chosen for the reason that the strength of the Nephite nation might lie between the fugitives and their former countrymen, the Lamanites, who then thirsted for their blood. It was bounded by the Caribbean Sea and the

land Bountiful on the north and east, and by the land of Antionum on the south. Its western boundary is not defined, but we are inclined to believe, from the context, that it was the river Sidon. Its geographical situation is partly described in *Alma x.vii. 22*, thus: We [the Nephites] will give up the land of Jershon, which is on the east by the sea, which joins the land Bountiful, which is on the south of the land Bountiful. With regard to its southern boundary, *Alma x.vi. 3* (which we shall hereafter quote), states that Antionum lay to the south of it.

ANTIONUM, the land where the Zoramite apostates gathered (B. C. 75), was an extensive and thinly-settled region, extending from the land of Jershon to the great southern wilderness. Its boundaries are thus defined (*Alma x.vi. 3*): Antionum, which was east of the land of Zarahemla, which lay nearly bordering upon the sea shore, which was south of the land of Jershon, which also bordered upon the wilderness south. By this we understand that it stretched north from the great wilderness, which passed by the head of the Sidon, almost to the Atlantic Ocean; that its western boundary was the land of Zarahemla, and Jershon its northern limit. Nothing is said of its eastern borders for the simple reason that at the time this passage was originally written, the country east was yet uninhabited, except possibly by a few wandering Lamanites. At its extreme southern or southeastern corner, "among the borders of the Lamanites" of the wilderness, was the outlying land of Siron. This place is mentioned but once in the Book of Mormon (*Alma x.vi. 3*).

MANTI.—During the days of the republic, Manti was a district of great importance to the Nephites. It

was situated contiguous to the wilderness at the head waters of the Sidon (*Alma xvi. 6*), and lay on the line of march generally taken by the armies of the Lamanites when they invaded Zarahemla. Its exact boundaries are not defined; indeed, it is altogether probable that they varied considerably at different periods of Nephite history. However, it is evident that it was the most southerly of all the lands inhabited by the Nephites, in the western half of the South American continent, after they had moved from the land of Nephi.

GIDEON.—In a valley on the east of the Sidon was built, during the early days of the republic, an important city, which was named after the martyr Gideon. The valley itself was also known by the same name, and is frequently called the land of Gideon, for we find no evidence to lead to the conclusion that the land extended beyond the valley. Nearly all that we know of this region is contained in a single passage (*Alma vi. 7*), which states that Alma left Zarahemla and went over upon the east of the river Sidon, into the valley of Gideon, there having been a city built which was called the city of Gideon, which was in the valley that was called Gideon, being called after the man who was slain by the hand of Nehor with the sword.

From the references in the historical narrative we incline to the opinion that this valley lay either directly east, or somewhat to the south of the city of Zarahemla. Travelers coming from the north are never mentioned as passing through it on their way to Zarahemla, without they had a purpose in so doing, as in the case where Moroni marched from the northeast to the relief of chief judge Pahoran (*Alma lxii*).