



Type: Magazine Article

Nephite Proper Names

Author(s): George Reynolds

Source: *Juvenile Instructor*, Vol. 15, No. 18 (15 September 1880), pp. 207–208

Published by: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Abstract: Lists Book of Mormon proper names that may or may not be found in the Bible, including Sariah, Nephi, Melek (or Mulek), Gershon, and Isabel. Looks for Hebrew or Egyptian roots.

But the constant use of beer is even worse than the occasional use of stronger drinks. Says Dr. Crothers, the editor of the *Quarterly Journal of Inebriety*:

"In appearance the beer-drinker may be the picture of health, but in reality he is the most incapable of resisting disease. A slight injury, severe cold, or shock to the body or mind, will commonly provoke acute disease, ending fatally. Compared with inebriates, who use different forms of alcohol, he is more generally diseased. The constant use of beer every day gives the system no time for recuperation, but steadily lowers the vital forces. It is our observation that beer-drinking in this country produces the very lowest forms of inebriety, closely allied to criminal insanity. The most dangerous class of tramps and ruffians in our large cities are beer-drinkers. It is asserted by competent authority, that the evils of heredity are more positive in this class than from alcoholics. If these facts are well founded, the recourse to beer as a substitute for alcohol only increases the danger and fatality following its use."

Alcohol in any form, from beer and cider to whisky and brandy, is an irritant, producing inflammation of the stomach and bowels, contraction and hardening of the brain, fevers, corpulency, consumption and death. Instead of its being a means of saving life, it kills strong men on every hand, cutting down the fairest and noblest, as the flowers fall before the mower's scythe. Let the young be taught that alcohol, in any form whatever, is a poison instead of a food or a medicine; then, if they choose to drink it, let them take the matter in their own hands like other suicides.—*Laws of Health*.

THE LOVE OF GLORY.—In the growth of the individual the intellect advances before the moral powers; for it is necessary to know what is right before we can practice it: and this same order of progress is observed in the human family. Moral excellence is the bright, consummate flower of all progress. It is often the peculiar product of age. And it is there, among other triumphs of virtue, that Deity assumes her commanding place, while personal ambition is abased. Burke, in that marvelous passage of elegiac beauty, where he mourns his only son, says, "Indeed, my Lord, I greatly deceive myself if, in this hard season, I would give a peck of refuse wheat for all that is called fame and honor in the world." And Channing, with a sentiment most unlike the ancient Roman orator, declares that he sees "Nothing worth living for but the divine virtue which endures and surrenders all things for truth, duty, and mankind." Such an insensibility to worldly objects, and such an elevation of spirit, may not be expected at once from all men—certainly not without some of the trials of Burke or the soul of Channing. But it is within the power of all to strive after that virtue, which it may be difficult to reach; and just in proportion as duty becomes the guide and the aim of life, shall we learn to close the soul against the allurements of praise and the asperities of censure, while we find satisfactions and compensations such as men cannot give or take away. The world, with ignorant or intolerant judgment, may condemn, the countenance of companion may be averted; the heart of friend may grow cold; but the consciousness of duty done will be sweeter than the applause of the world, than the countenance of companion, or the heart of friend.—*Charles Sumner*.

LET amusements fill up the ebinks of your existence, but not the great spaces thereof.

NEPHITE PROPER NAMES.

BY G. R.

THE number of Bible proper names found in the Book of Mormon has been now and again urged as an argument against its divine origin. If those making these objections were to calmly consider the matter, we believe they would quickly acknowledge that it would be very inconsistent to expect the opposite. Nearly all devout races are in the habit of naming their children after the holy men—patriarchs, martyrs and sages—whose lives they reverence, and whose virtues they desire to see reproduced in their offspring. It is so with ourselves; nearly all our most familiar names are English forms of Bible names. For example: John, James, Jacob, Joseph and Thomas among men, and Mary, Anna, Elizabeth and Sarah among women. So it was with the Nephites. The Hebrew was the language of their sacred literature, while their fondest recollections, their holiest pride ran back to the days of Abraham and Joseph, Moses and Joshua; and, like other races, they named their children after the ancient worthies they revered most. Hence, we find the following Bible names borne by the descendants of Lehi* and Sariah: Aaron, Aminadab, Ammon, Ammah, Amos, Benjamin, Enos, Gideon, Gilgal, Helam, Helem, Isaias, Ishmael, Jacob, Joseph, Jeremiah, Jonas, Laban, Lemuel, Noah, Samuel, Shem, Timothy and Zedekiah. A few others are evidently slightly altered Hebrew names, as Chemish from Chemosh, Sherem from Shaaraim, and Zenos from Zenas. Indeed, there may be no actual difference; the apparent difference may arise from the English translators inserting a wrong vowel sound in words where, according to the ancient custom, the consonants only were written.

We will now consider a few of the proper names found in the Book of Mormon, but not in the Bible, for, notwithstanding the changes made by the Nephites in their language, the derivation and signification of many of these names are evident, when considered in connection with the languages of the races with whom the ancient Hebrews were brought most closely in contact.

Sariah is obviously Hebrew. It is a name of extreme beauty and force. Its roots are in Sara, a princess, and Jah or Jah, Jehovah, thus meaning a princess of Jehovah; a most fitting name for the mother of a multitude of nations.

Nephi is another very remarkable name. Its roots are Egyptian; its meaning, good, excellent, benevolent. From very ancient times the Egyptians believed that all who died had to have their acts upon earth scrutinized by a council of inquisitors, before they could be proclaimed fit to enter the eternal abodes of bliss and stand in the presence of the god Osiris, the chief lord of the land of the departed. One of the names given to this god, expressive of his attributes was Nephi or Dnephi (the D being silent, as in Dniester, Dnieper, etc.) or the good, and the chief city dedicated to him was called N-ph, translated into the Hebrew as Noph, in which form it appears in Hosea, Isaiah and Jeremiah. Its modern English name is Memphis. In the Coptic, the language of the modern Egyptians, the word has the form of Menti or Mnefi. Plutarch, the ancient historian, says that Dnephi was a benevolent person, and an epithet for Osiris, and also applicable to Memphis, the sepulchre of that god. The word Nephi frequently appears in Egyptian proper names before the Christian era, as Amoneph, Amuneph, Me-Nephita. From

*—The name Lehi, itself, is to be found in *Judges xv., 9*.

these facts we conclude that Nephi was a common name in the Egyptian tongue, and, as far as the founder of the Nephite nation was concerned, most applicable to his character, which was pre-eminently good and benevolent.

The English word, Nephites, that is the people or family of Nephi, occurs twice in its Hebrew form in the Old Testament; once in *Ezra* (ii., 50) as Nephusim, and again in *Nehemiah* (vii., 52) as Nephishesun, which shows that the name was common among the Hebrews of the age of the captivity.

Melek is the name given to a region of country situated west of the river Sidon. No reason is given why it was so called, but its meaning is evident. It was the king's land. The ancient Phœnician word for king is spelled letter for letter the same as in the Book of Mormon (*Melek*), and the Hebrew word was almost identical.

Gershon, the name applied to the land given by the Nephites to the exiled Ammonites, means the land of the expelled, or of the strangers. We think it altogether probable that this significant name was given to it at the time it was set off for the habitation of these expatriated Christian Lamanites, as it defines their condition as exiles, and their relation to the Nephites as strangers. The name is not mentioned before this event, and would possibly be the only local name by which it was known to the compiler of the Book of Mormon. Before the date of this exodus, it was, we think, considered a portion of the land of Zarahemla.

Isabel is either a form of Jezebel, the chaste, a name given in derision to the character who bore it, or it has its derivation like *Isaiah*, which means the delight of Jehovah, and thus signifies the light of Bel, that is to say, her lord, husband or possessor. It may have been assumed to suggest the supposed joys of her society. It is a remarkable fact that the land wherein she dwelt is styled the land of Siron, that is, the land of the deserters, or apostates. It was situated at the extreme edge of the Nephite possessions, and on the borders of the Lamanites', beyond the land of Antionum, in which dwelt the Zoramite apostates. The experience of the Saints in this age teaches them how apt apostates are to draw off to remote corners, where they fancy the reproofs of the priesthood are least likely to be heard. In such a place, far from the Nephite capital, outside the reach of the rigors of the law of Moses, the enticing *Isabel* could carry on her vile vocation with the greatest safety and impunity.

Ha-ha, we suggest means laughter. Sarah, the wife of Abraham called her son Isaac—laughter. The sound of the word also resembles a laugh, and again, it is the name for laughter in the language of the modern Sioux, as *Mime-aha*—laughing water.

Without being able to express a positive opinion, but simply as a suggestion, we insert the supposed meaning of the following words:

Nephilah	Jehovah's consolation.
Ammon	A worker of Jehovah.
Shazer or Shazeh)	Chastity.
Nahom	Consolation.
Zarahemlah	From a rising of light, or whom He (God) will fill up.
Laman	White (another form of Laban).
Manti	Relating to prophets or oracles.

Many others might be inserted, but might possibly prove irksome.

Before closing this branch of inquiry we will draw attention to the ancient Nephite prefixes and suffixes. These matters may not be of great interest to the general reader, but to the

student of the Book of Mormon they may prove an incentive to further interesting research.

Among the most numerous prefixes found in Book of Mormon proper names, are Am, Anti, Gid and Hel, of which the first is by far the most frequent. We find Am in Aumon, Amaron, Ammaron, Ammoron, Amoron, Amulon, Amnor, Ammonihah, Amalickiah, Annah, Amlici, Aminadi, etc.; Anti in Antionah, Antionno, Antipus, Antionum and Anti-Nephi-Lehi. It was also used as a suffix, as Ani-Anti. The prefix Gid we find in Giddiandi, Gidgiddoni, Giddonah and Gidgidonah; and Hel in Helem, Helam, Helaman and Heloram.

Not to make this portion of our investigations tedious, we will only give two or three examples of the suffixes that appear to have been most in use.

ah, as Zarahemlah, Giddonah, Cumorah.
 am, as Zoram, Lauram, Seezoram.
 iah, as Amalickiah, Mosiah.
 ihah, as Nephilah, Moronihah, Cumenihah.
 om, as Sidom, Shiblom, Jarom.
 on, as Mormon, Emron, Corianton.
 or, as Amnor, Corihor, Nehor.
 en, Kunen, Kishkumen.
 um, as Teancum, Helorum, Moriantum.
 us, as Antipus, Archaentus, Lachoneus.
 oni, Moroni, Lamoni, Mathoni.
 di, Aminadi, Abinadi, Gideandi.
 hi, as Nephi, Zenephi, Jimhi.
 ti, Lehonti, Manti.
 doni,* as Gidgiddoni, Middoni.

Biography.

JOSEPH SMITH THE PROPHET.

(Continued.)

GOVERNOR FORD, in a book which he wrote concerning the "Mormons," says, that the intelligence of the assassination of Joseph and Hyrum perfectly astounded him; and he anticipated the very worst consequences from that deed. He acknowledges, however, that he expected that the jail would be attacked, but not until the day after it was attacked. This admission proves very clearly that he knew concerning the measures of the mob to assassinate the prisoners. It may be that the mobbers did not tell him of their plans; they may have deceived him as to the hour or time when they would attack the jail. His own writing conveys this idea; and it may be correct. But he knew enough of the plan to be very culpable for not taking measures to prevent the murders. He expressed his belief that the murderers of Joseph and Hyrum seized the opportunity to kill them while he was absent at Nauvoo, with the idea that the people of Nauvoo, upon hearing of the murder of Joseph and Hyrum, would kill him.

It may be that this was a part of the plan of the mob; for such scoundrels have no honor, and they knew very well that if the governor should be killed at Nauvoo, the whole State would be aroused, and the Latter-day Saints would be mur-

*—We suggest that this is a form of the Hebrew word Adonai—Lord.