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The Lands of the Nephites: Nephi Under the Lamanites

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Abstract: A series of essays on Book of Mormon geography. To the earlier Nephites “the whole of North America was known as the land of Mulek, and South America as the land of Lehi.” From the period of Mosiah until Christ South America was “divided into two grand divisions”: Zarahemla and the land of Nephi.

always appreciate this method of crowding fame upon us. We may feel that the various attacks made upon us by the opponents of the work are outrages. We do not say they are not. Their authors deserve no credit for them; for they intend them as blows. But let us look at these dispassionately and philosophically, and we shall perceive, that in the end, under the overruling providence of God, who makes the wrath of man praise Him, they play an exceedingly important part in our favor.

We say again, therefore, no one need be afraid that trials and persecutions are all behind us. If they live and remain connected with this Church, the most ardent and zealous candidates for experience of this character will be likely to get all that is necessary to satisfy them. Satan is not likely to die soon. Just now he is a very lively personage, and we have no idea that he is likely to slacken in his activity while he has so many, as at present ready to do what he wants.

THE LANDS OF THE NEPHITES.

NEPHI UNDER THE LAMANITES.

BY G. R.

(Continued.)

IN the second generation the Nephites began to grow numerous, and iniquity made its appearance among them. It was then that Jacob, their priest (the younger brother of Nephi), prophesied: "The time speedily cometh, that except ye repent, they" (the Lamanites) "shall possess the land of your inheritance, and the Lord God will lead away the righteous out from among you" (134).^{*} This prophecy was completely fulfilled about 300 years or so afterwards, when Mosiah, by the command of God, led the righteous Nephites out of the land of their inheritance—the land of Nephi—down into the land of Zarahemla (155).

From this time the land of Nephi was possessed and ruled by the posterity of Laman, Lemuel and Ishmael, or by Nephite apostates, who, with superior cunning, worked themselves on to the Lamanitish throne.

During the era that the Nephites dwelt in the land of Nephi, they built several cities. These the Lamanites eagerly took possession of when Mosiah and his people vacated them. We are not told when and by whom these cities were founded, such particulars, doubtless, appear on the plates of the kings. It is only incidentally that we learn anything regarding them, which is found in the record of Zeniff's return from Zarahemla, and re-occupancy, by treaty with the Lamanites, of a portion of the old Nephite home.

The Lamanites of that age were a wild, ferocious, blood-thirsty and nomadic race, who did not build cities, for the simple reason that they had neither the inclination nor the skill. But when they found the Nephite cities deserted of their inhabitants, they immediately occupied them. Even then, they did not enlarge or repair them, but let them fall into gradual decay.

No sooner had the Lamanites surrendered the cities of Lehi-Nephi and Shilom to Zeniff, than his people set to work to build buildings and to repair their walls (182). In the next generation King Noah caused many fine buildings and towers to be built in both the lands of Lehi-Nephi and Shilom (187).

The two cities above mentioned are the only ones directly

spoken of in the Book of Mormon up to this time. There was most probably a city built in the contiguous land of Shemlon, which was held by the Lamanites, but it is never mentioned by name.

We judge Shilom lay to the northward of Lehi-Nephi, and in the same valley or plateau; otherwise it could not have been so completely viewed from King Noah's tower, mentioned in our last chapter. Its relative position to Lehi-Nephi appears from the fact that those who went to or from the land of Zarahemla, generally did so by way of Shilom; it seems to have lain in the direct route between the two capital cities. Ammon, the Zarahemlite, and his company entered in that way, and Lemhi and his people escaped in this same direction (176 and 212).

The next city that we read of is called Helam. It was located eight days' journey (213) from Nephi towards Zarahemla, and was founded by Alma, the elder, and his followers, when they fled from the murderous persecutions of King Noah. This city and the surrounding country were called after the first man baptized by Alma in the waters of Mormon. His name was Helam (201), and he was doubtless a leader among that people.

In the same direction from Nephi as Helam, and apparently adjoining thereto, lay the land of Amulon. It was first peopled by the fugitive priests of Noah, when they fled from the vengeance of the justly incensed Nephites. The leader of this band of wicked men was named Amulon, and in his honor the land was so called (215). The king of the Lamanites afterwards made Amulon the tributary king, or chief local ruler over the lands of Helam and Amulon. From this we judge that they lay side by side, their boundaries extending indefinitely into the great wilderness.

Our next information regarding the condition of the land of Nephi is gleaned from the history of the mission of the sons of King Mosiah, to the Lamanites in that region. This mission commenced B. C. 91, and lasted fourteen years (283).

We now find the Lamanites considerably advanced in civilization, many of them inhabiting populous cities. The country is divided into several distinct kingdoms, each ruled by its own king, but all subject to the head monarch whose court is at Nephi (299).

The lands specially mentioned in connection with this mission are those of Nephi, Middoui, Ishmael, Shilom, Shemlon, Helam, Amulon and Jerusalem.

Shilom and Shemlon we have already shown to be in the neighborhood of Lehi-Nephi; Helam, eight days' journey for loaded teams to the north, and Amulon not far distant therefrom. It now becomes our duty to enquire what can be learned of the lands of Jerusalem, Ishmael and Middoui.

The location of the land of Jerusalem is clearly stated. It was "away joining the borders of Mormon," that is, on the other side, probably east or north from Nephi. Here, somewhere about 100 years B. C., the Lamanites with Amulonites and other apostate Nephites, built a great and thriving city, which they called Jerusalem, after their father's ancient home in Judea (279).

Here Aaron, the son of Mosiah, unsuccessfully preached the gospel. Its apostate citizens were too sin-hardened to accept the message he bore. This city was afterwards destroyed on account of its great wickedness and persecution of the Saints, in the terrors that attended the crucifixion of the Savior, and waters came up in the place thereof (497). A stagnant sea, akin to that which covers Sodom and Gomorrah, occupies the place where once its proud palaces and rich synagogues stood.

^{*}The figures refer to pages in the Book of Mormon, new edition.

The first land visited by the missionary prince, Ammon, was Ishmael; its situation is not clearly stated. It was *down* from Nephi. This leads to the thought that it lay in the alluvial plains considerably east of the Andes. It does not seem compatible with the narrative of Ammon's mission to believe it was situated in the narrow strip of wilderness that lay between the mountains and the Pacific Ocean. Its relative position to other lands precludes this idea.

Near the highway that connected Ishmael and Nephi lay the land of Middoni. This is shown by the fact that when Ammon and King Lamoni were traveling from Ishmael towards Middoni they met Lamoni's father, the head king of all the land (295), coming from Nephi. This leads to the conclusion that the same road from Ishmael led to both Nephi and Middoni.

Nephi is called *up* from both these lands (294 and 300); 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.

(To be Continued.)

LETTER TO THE BOYS.

SALT LAKE CITY,

December 27th, 1880.

G. H. RHEAD thinks the "Word of Wisdom" a good subject to write upon; yes, I think it is always a good subject, and it is one upon which so much has been spoken and preached that it seems enough has been said; it only remains for us to reduce it to practice.

The "Word of Wisdom" comprises a volume, which it would do well for all to study, for it is a regime that relates to our entire life; eating and drinking being two grand essentials.

I have not space to elaborate the subject. Consider and read the volume with prayer and attention, and you will be greatly benefited thereby. We ought to learn to be our own physicians!

ENOCH BROWN'S letter denotes a thinking, consistent, manly mind; and does credit to his head and heart. He seems to have a comprehension of things that make good Latter-day Saints.

"Tithing!" I do believe that young men and women earning anything, in whatever way, will be blessed and prospered if they will make it a rule to pay their tithing, according to their means. This ought to be done by the young as well as by those of more mature years.

Dear brother, I am much pleased with your letter, and will say "Continue in well doing." In keeping up this correspondence, express your ideas, ask a question or questions, and this will call out what is in us.

MYRON A. ABBOTT:—Your letters are ever sensible and good, and I see that your mind is alive to the duties of life. Continue to cultivate it, and in days to come you will be able to say and realize "My mind to me a kingdom is."

You suggest etiquette as a subject, attention to which is certainly good, for good manners make a "letter of introduction," that is very desirable to carry about with us.

People who seem to think manners beneath their notice make a great mistake, for they have alone made many a fortune; and, on the other hand, indifference to manners has marred as many.

A thorough Latter-day Saint will have much of good manners, even if he should not have been trained in the school of politeness. Still, there are technical rules that at once denote

the lady or gentleman, and certainly they are very delightful when we meet such, and should never be despised or thought unnecessary.

You will see the highest style of politeness in the sacred pages of the Bible.

Please ask me a question—not too great for a common intellect—and if I can, I shall have great pleasure in answering it. Let it be something practical, and in every-day life affairs, or that will apply to such.

Be yourself, and believe that you are as good a scholar as the rest, or, at any rate, as desirous to progress in all useful knowledge; and if I can assist you I shall be delighted.

Your friend,

HANNAH T. KING.

P. S.—I have to acknowledge the receipt of letters from A. W. Reynolds and W. W. Rubey. H. T. K.

Letters From The Boys.

SPRINGVILLE, UTAH,

December 23, 1880.

Mrs. Hannah T. King,

DEAR SISTER:—It is with great pleasure that I write you these few lines. This is my first attempt to write for the INSTRUCTOR. I have not yet got over my timidity, but I feel it my duty to help to keep up the correspondence.

I always loved the Sabbath school, and have attended whenever I could. I have been brought up in the Church of Jesus Christ, and have been taught to love the truth.

My mother died three years ago, and since that time my father has sent me to school; so you see I have a chance to improve my talents, and I have been taught the principles of our religion, for which I feel thankful.

I will conclude, hoping your correspondence will continue.

Your brother in the gospel,

ARTHUR W. REYNOLDS.

SPRINGVILLE CITY,

December 20, 1880.

Mrs. Hannah T. King,

DEAR SISTER:—I trust that by the blessing of the Lord I may be able to convey my thoughts sufficient to give you a brief sketch of some of my experience, and of such things as I have witnessed of late years.

I read with great interest the "Book of Mormon Sketches" and of the ancient dealings of God with the children of men, as published in the INSTRUCTOR.

During the year 1878 I was engaged in the vicinity of the Colorado river, among the She-bitch mountains, where I found many things to amuse myself with. There are many indications of ancient inhabitants. There are small pieces of clay work scattered over the plains, which appear like fragments of water vessels, pots, jars, etc. There are foundations of stone work which have decayed and crumbled down nearly level with the earth. These are mostly found in the tops of the mountains and hills. Occasionally there can be seen scratches and different shaped marks on the rocks, such as are generally seen in an Indian country.

That part of the country is now inhabited by Mokiak Indians. Their food is mostly grass seed and yant. They do not farm nor employ themselves industriously, but spend their time in idleness and skulking through the timber in search of hawks' and crows' nests, the small ground squirrel and other small animals which are very scarce.