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### Destruction of Ancient Nations in America: The Book of Mormon Message to the Gentile Nations Occupying the Land

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# DESTRUCTION OF ANCIENT NATIONS IN AMERICA\*

## The Book of Mormon Message to the Gentile Nations Occupying the Land

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Two nations, with two distinct civilizations, occupied America in ancient times, and both had been destroyed before the arrival of the Europeans who came toward the close of the fifteenth century.

### *The Jaredites*

The colony which developed into the first nation came direct from the Euphrates Valley—from the Tower of Babel, at the time of the confusion of languages. They were known as the Jaredites, because a leader of the colony was a man of that name—Jared. Through a special favor from God to the family of Jared, and his brother, Moriancumer, their language, and the language of a few of their friends, was not confounded. Under divine direction this colony departed from Babel northward, and thence were led through Asia, eastwardly, until they came to the shore of the great sea—the Pacific Ocean—"which divided the lands." Here they remained four years; and then by divine commandment constructed eight barges in which to cross the mighty ocean to a land of promise, to which God had covenanted to bring them; to a land "which was choice above all other lands, which the Lord God had reserved for a righteous people." The colony is generally supposed to have landed on the western coast of North America, probably south of the Gulf of California.

This colony finally so multiplied that it became a mighty people, one of the greatest nations of antiquity, with a population spread over a great part of eastern North America—including Central America, Mexico, thence northward to the great lakes, and from the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains to the Atlantic. Their numbers, according to the record, must have exceeded ten millions of people.

The Jaredites had a varied experience: peace and war; famine, pestilence, revolutions; the usual ebb and flow of prosperity and adversity they experienced; wealth, corruption; then decline and barbarism, and finally destruction, up to utter extinction of the nation and race. This last calamity overtook them about six hundred years B. C., in the region of the Hill Cumorah, called by them Ramah, and about the time of the landing of the second colony upon the shores of America, *viz.*,

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\*Read by LeRoi C. Snow at the Smith Farm meeting, Cumorah Conference, Sept. 23, 1923.



### *The Nephites*

The Nephites were a colony that came direct from Jerusalem, made up of families who were descendants of the Patriarch Joseph, son of Jacob. They were led by their prophets and seers to the land of America, where they also expanded into a nation. Internal strifes early separated them into two main divisions, known as Nephites and Lamanites. Plots and counter plots, leading to strifes and wars make up the varied history of these two peoples through a period of a thousand years. Then both divisions having so departed from the ways of righteousness as to lose the favor of God, a great civil war broke out in the fourth century A. D., in which the Nephites—who generally stood for civilization, religion and orderly government—were overwhelmed and destroyed by the barbarous Lamanites, also about the Hill Cumorah. After that the Lamanites, already degenerated into anarchy, lived on in a state of barbarism, resolved into the tribal relations obtaining when discovered by Europeans near the close of the fifteenth century.

### *The Colony of Mulek*

There was another colony led from Jerusalem to America after the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, usually accounted as happening about 587 B. C. This colony was made up of Jews. In their wanderings in the north American continent, however, they came in contact with the Nephites and were absorbed by them, and lost their identity as a people. They were known as the colony of Mulek—the name of their leader.

This, in briefest outline, represents the coming of colonies to America, their expansion into nations, their decline and fall. It outlines a melancholy history. I refer to it here that it may teach its mighty lesson, and impart that lesson to the nations now occupying the lands of those ancient nations.

### *America a Promised Land—Choice Above All Other Lands*

The Book of Mormon informs us that when the waters of the flood, which came in the days of Noah, receded from the face of this land of Zion—America, the western continents “became a choice land, above all other lands, a chosen land of the Lord; wherefore the Lord would have that all men should serve him who dwell upon the face thereof.” (Ether 13:2.)

When the Lord was leading the colony of Jared to this land of America, he would not suffer them to “stop beyond the sea in the wilderness, but he would that they should come forth even to the land of promise, *which was choice above all other lands*, which the Lord had preserved for a righteous people.”

“And he had sworn in his wrath unto the brother of Jared, that whoso should possess this land of promise, from that time henceforth and forever,



should serve him, the true and only God, or they should be swept off when the fulness of his wrath should come upon them.

"And now, we can behold the decrees of God concerning this land, that it is a land of promise; and whatsoever nation shall possess it shall serve God, or they shall be swept off when the fulness of his wrath shall come upon them. And the fulness of his wrath cometh upon them when they are ripened in iniquity.

"For behold, this is a land which is choice above all other lands; wherefore he that doth possess it shall serve God or shall be swept off; for it is the everlasting decree of God. And it is not until the fulness of iniquity among the children of the land that they are swept off." (Ether 2:8-10.)

Then comes the special warning to the Gentile nations, who would occupy the land in our times:

*"And this cometh unto you, O ye gentiles, that ye may know the decrees of God—that ye may repent, and not continue in your iniquities until the fulness come, that ye may not bring down the fulness of the wrath of God upon you as the inhabitants of the land have hitherto done.*

*"Behold, this is a choice land, and whatsoever nation shall possess it shall be free from bondage, and from captivity, and from all other nations under heaven, if they will but serve the God of the land, who is Jesus Christ, who hath been manifested by the things which we have written."* (Ether 2:11, 12.)

This is a prophetic contribution to our American knowledge, and a warning also by Moroni, the abridger of, and the commentator upon the Jaredite history as we have it in his Book of Ether.

This message is echoed and re-echoed through the prophetic utterances of the records of the Nephites, and by special warnings of Christ himself. At one point of a communication made to the Nephites, the risen Christ said to them:

"And thus commandeth the Father that I should say unto you: At that day when the Gentiles shall sin against my gospel, and shall be lifted up in the pride of their hearts *above all nations, and above all the people of the whole earth*, and shall be filled with all manner of lyings, and of deceits, and of mischiefs, and all manner of hypocrisy, and murders, and priestcrafts, and whoredoms, and of secret abominations; and if they shall do all those things, and shall reject the fulness of my gospel, behold, saith the Father, I will bring the fulness of my gospel from among them.

"And then will I remember my covenant which I have made unto my people, O house of Israel, and I will bring my gospel unto them.

"And I will show unto thee, O house of Israel, that the Gentiles shall not have power over you; but I will remember my covenant unto you, O house of Israel, and ye shall come unto the knowledge of the fulness of my gospel.

"But if the Gentiles will repent and return unto me, saith the Father, behold they shall be numbered among my people, O house of Israel." (III Nephi 16:10-13).

There is much more to the same effect, but let this suffice for the present. Here is sufficient set forth of the message of the Book of Mormon to show the great and proud Gentile nation that it was

foreseen that such a nation would be raised up in the Western World in the last days. A glorious station is to be granted unto it; inasmuch that its people would become "lifted up in the pride of their hearts above all nations, and above all the people of the whole earth." A condition to which the nation of the United States has most certainly attained. And that exalted station they may hold if they adhere to righteousness and worship the God of the land, who is pro-



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claimed to be Jesus Christ. And if that proud nation will not observe these two things, then woe be unto it, for its doom is sealed, its fate is fixed. It will be destroyed, even as the other nations have been destroyed which occupied the land before it—the Jaredites and the Nephites.

These prophetic warnings to this great Gentile nation—our nation, the United States of America—constitute one of the most important messages of the Book of Mormon to the modern world. It is a message of both national and international importance; for so are the relations of the United States interwoven with the nations of all



the earth that no large calamity can overtake our nation but what would spell disaster to all other nations of the earth.

Hear, then, this warning, O thou proud, Gentile nation that leads the world in power and excellence of dominion, and unto whom is accorded by universal acclamation the leadership among the nations of the earth. That pride of place is thine, and thou mayest hold it on the condition of strict adherence to righteousness, and honoring the God of the land, who is Jesus Christ. On these two conditions depend all thy prestige, all thy glory, all thy power—thy pride of place. If there has been in any measure a departure from the path direct of righteousness, individually and nationally—and who can doubt that there has been?—even then if thou wilt but *repent*, thy God, yea, the God of thy Fathers, will be swift to forgive—and to hold thee in thy high place of prestige, and power, and glory.

This is iterated and re-iterated through this volume of American scripture, the Book of Mormon, and constitutes a message of great national importance. Will ye not heed it, O ye Gentiles? And by heeding the warning, live? And living, fulfil the high mission which God has assigned to you in the achievement of his high purpose in the last days. God grant that you may have the faith and the grace for these high things.

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## Blustery Weather

Dreary is the grayish sky,  
Moisture-laden winds are high;  
Hungry birdies, fretting, cry  
As they swiftly homeward fly.

Swaying, bending, sighing low,  
Stand the trees in quivering row,  
Rain-soaked and a-dripping so  
That they lean in arching bow.

Little grasses 'neath our feet  
Close to Mother earth now creep,  
Seeking shelter from the sleet  
That's wind-blown o'er lawn and  
street.

Barn doors, in the wind's breath,  
bang;  
Creak the hinges where they hang,  
Shrieking like some death-stirred pang  
That in winter storms hath rung.

The ground is wet, a-reeking through;  
Dry things left are but a few.  
If wind and rain don't stop, who  
Can tell us what we'll ever do?

But be patient, this won't last,  
God in storms his blessings casts  
O'er the earth, as in the past  
Gave he sunshine; so, stand fast.

Life is as the weather here:  
One day blustery, next day clear;  
Just trust the Lord, have no fear,  
Then he'll guide you through this  
sphere.

When this mortal life is o'er,  
And on earth we dwell no more,  
May our spirits onward soar  
To that stormless, heavenly shore.

*Lais, Oahu.*

M. F. KIRKHAM.