



Type: Book Chapter

Migrations to the Western Hemisphere and the Nations that Arose from Them

Author(s): B.H. Roberts

Source: *New Witnesses for God: Volume II - The Book of Mormon*

Published: Salt Lake City; Deseret News, 1909

Pages: 139-168

CHAPTER X.

MIGRATIONS TO THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE AND THE NATIONS THAT AROSE FROM THEM.^a

According to the Book of Mormon there have been three migrations from the old world to the new. These, in their chronological order, are, first, the colony of Jared; second, the colony of Lehi; and third, the colony of Mulek. It is necessary to the completeness of this work to give a brief account of each of these colonies, together with their development into great nations in the western world, a summary of their history, and a brief description of their civilization.

I. THE JAREDITES.

Migration and Place of Landing.

The colony of Jared, according to the Book of Mormon, departed from the Tower of Babel about the time of the confusion of languages; which, if the Hebrew chronology of the Bible be accepted, was an event that took place 2,247 B. C. Through a special favor to the family of Jared and his brother, *Moriancumer*,^b the language of these families, and that of a few of their friends was not confounded. Under divine direction they departed from

^aIt is to be understood that in this chapter I deal merely with the migrations spoken of in the Book of Mormon; and by no means enter upon consideration of the migrations to the western hemisphere during the last two thousand years.

^bSee 6th Letter of Oliver Cowdery on "Early Scenes and Incidents in the Church," "Messenger and Advocate," Vol I., p. 112, 1835, where the above name is given as the name of the "Brother of Jared."

Babel northward into a valley called Nimrod, and thence were led by the Lord across the continent of Asia^c eastward until they came to the shore of the great sea—Pacific Ocean—which divided the lands. Here they remained four years; and then by divine appointment 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.” After a severely stormy passage—continuing for 344 days, the colony landed on the western coast of North America, “probably south of the Gulf of California.”^d

Soon after their arrival the people of the colony began to scatter out upon the face of the land, and multiply, and till the earth; “and they did wax strong in the land.”^e Previous to the demise of Moriancumer and Jared, the people were called together and a kingly government founded, Orihah, the youngest son of Jared, being anointed king.

Capital and Centres of Civilization.

The capital of the kingdom was doubtless the city of Moron, in a province or “land” of the same name, the location of which is unknown except that it was near the land

^cSuch is the theory of the late Orson Pratt. See foot note “h” Book of Ether, Chap. 2. There is nothing in the Book of Ether which positively determines the course of their travels, but as there is some reason for believing that the Jaredite colony landed on the western shores of North America, there seems to be some grounds for the belief that they were led eastward across the continent of Asia to the shores of what is to us the Pacific Ocean.

^dAccording to Orson Pratt. See foot note “h,” Book of Ether, Chap. VI:12. Also Book of Ether, Chap. vii:6.

^eEther vi; 19.

called by the Nephites "Desolation." "Now," says Moroni, "the land of Moron, where the king dwelt, was near the land which is called 'Desolation' by the Nephites;"^f and later he informs us that this "land of Moron" was the land of the "first inheritance" of the Jaredites.^g This locates the land of Moron near the land called by the Nephites "Desolation," and the land of Desolation, according to the Nephite records, bordered on the north of the land Bountiful, at that point where it was but a day and a half's journey for a Nephite from the sea east to the sea west."^h This would bring the southern borders of the land Desolation well down towards the continent of South America, perhaps to some point on that narrow neck of land known to us as the Isthmus of Panama. The northern limits of what the Nephites called the land Desolation may not be so easily ascertained. Whether it extended north and westward beyond the peninsula of Yucatan or ended south and east of that peninsula may not be definitely determined; but from the general tenor of the references to it in the Book of Mormon, it was, when compared with the whole country, occupied by the Nephites, a small division of the country, a local province, and bounded on the north by what the Jaredites called the land of Moron, the land of the Jaredites' first inheritance.ⁱ

According to the late Elder Orson Pratt the place of the Jaredite's "first inheritance," or landing, was "on the western coast, and probably south of the Gulf of California,"^j though he gives no reason for his statement. Elder George Reynolds, speaking of the land of Moron, "where

^fEther vii; 6.

^gEther vii; 6.

^hAlma xxii; 32.

ⁱEther vii; 6, 16, 17.

^jNote "h" on Ether vi:12.

the Jaredites made their first settlement," says: "It was north of the land called Desolation by the Nephites, and consequently in some part of the region which we know as Central America."^k This conclusion, of course, is based upon the idea that the land Desolation was comparatively but a small Nephite province, an idea that, as already remarked, is forced upon the mind from the general tenor of the Book of Mormon references to it.

This land "Desolation," so named by the Nephites because of the evidence of ruin and destruction that everywhere abounded in it when first discovered by them, not because its lands were not fertile, was evidently a great centre of population in Jaredite times. About 123 B. C. a company of Nephites—forty-three in number—sent out by one Limhi, came into the land afterwards called "Desolation" and described it as "a land which was covered with dry bones, yea, a land which had been peopled, and which had been destroyed."^l Another description of the land found by Limhi's expedition is that they "discovered a land which was covered with bones of men, and of beasts, and was also covered with the ruins of buildings of every kind: * * * * a land which had been peopled with a people who were as numerous as the hosts of Israel."^j And for a testimony that the things they said were true, they brought from the land twenty-four plates which were filled with engravings, and the plates were of pure gold. And behold, also, they brought breast plates, which were large, and they were of brass and of copper, and perfectly sound. And again, they brought swords, the hilts of which had perished, and the blades were

^kDictionary of the Book of Mormon, Art. Mormon, p. 245.

^lMosiah xxi; 25, 26.

^jMosiah viii:8-11, also Helaman iii:6.

cankered with rust; but no one in the land could interpret the language or the engravings that were on the plates.”[”]

It is evident that the land of Moron, north of Desolation, was the chief centre of Jaredite civilization, and the principal seat of government from the time of their first landing in America—some twenty-two centuries B. C.—to the last civil war which ended in the destruction of the nation, in the sixth century B. C. The evidence of the foregoing statement is seen in the fact that Moron is the land of their first inheritance; and also that nearly all their great civil wars throughout their national existence, down to and including the last, raged in and about the land of Moron^r—except the last great battles of the last war which were fought about the Hill Ramah, the Hill Cumorah of the Nephites. This fixes the centre of Jaredite civilization for a period of some sixteen centuries in Central America. True, there is evidence that the Jaredites occupied at one time very much of the north continent;^s but the land Moron, in Central America, was the seat of government and the centre of civilization of the great empire. In the reign of the fourth king of the Jaredites, Omer, a conspiracy overthrew his authority; and would doubtless have ended in his assassination; but warned of God in a dream,

[”]Mosiah vii:8-11. These plates were afterwards translated by the Nephite King, Mosiah, who was a seer; that is, one who could use Urim and Thummim. The record which he translated gave an account of the people who were destroyed from the time “they were destroyed back to the building of the great Tower at the time the Lord confounded the language of the people. * * * * * Yea, and even from that time until the creation of Adam.” (Mosiah xxviii; 11, 17). Subsequently Moroni gave an abridged translation of the same record which he called the “Book of Ether,” Ether being the name of the prophet who wrote the book so translated.

^rSee the whole Book of Ether.

^sEther x:21.

he departed out of the land with his family, and “traveled many days,” and “came over by the place where the Nephites were destroyed”—that is, by the Hill Cumorah, south of Lake Ontario, in the state of New York—“and from thence eastward, and came to a place that was called Ablom, by the sea shore, and there he pitched his tent.”^t Here he was joined later by others who fled from the tyranny of those who had usurped the kingdom.” This land of “Ablom,” the late Elder Orson Pratt suggested, was “probably on the shore of the New England states.”^v So far as known this marks the northern limits of Jaredite occupancy of the north continent.

In the reign of the sixteenth king—in whose days “the whole face of the land northward was covered with inhabitants,”^w a “great city was founded at the narrow neck of land,” that is, at some point on the Isthmus of Panama. That city marked the southern limits of the Jaredite empire. They never entered South America for the purpose of colonization, but preserved it “for a wilderness,” in which “to get game.”^x

The width of the empire east and west, north of the Gulf of Mexico, may not be determined. Whether it extended from ocean to ocean, or was confined to the Missouri-Mississippi valleys, and thence eastward south of the great lakes to the Atlantic, may not be positively asserted; but personally I incline to the latter opinion, notwithstanding the statement of the Book of Mormon to the effect that “the whole face of the land northward was covered with inhabitants.” This I believe to be merely a general expression

^tEther ix: 1-3.

^uEther ix: 9.

^vSee foot note to Ether ix: 3.

^wEther x: 21.

^xEther x: 20.

meant to convey the idea of a very extensive occupancy of the north continent by the Jaredites; but as it does not compel us to believe that the writer had in mind Labrador, the regions of Hudson's Bay and Alaska, so I do not think it requires us to believe that the Jaredites occupied the Rocky mountains, and regions westward of them. My principal reason for thinking that the Jaredite empire was limited northward to the great lakes, eastward from the Rocky mountain slopes—northward of the Gulf of Mexico—to the Atlantic, and southward to the Isthmus of Panama, is because—as will appear later—to that territory, magnificent in its extent, are more strictly confined what I regard as the evidences of Jaredite occupancy.

Extent and Nature of Civilization.

The extent of Jaredite civilization would be co-extensive with the territory they occupied, the limits of which have already been considered. Of its nature one may judge somewhat when it is remembered that they were colonists from the Euphrates valley, shortly after the flood; and very likely the nature of their buildings, especially of their public buildings, temples and other places of worship, would take on the general features of the buildings in ancient Babel modified in time, of course, by their own advancement in architecture.

That they were a prosperous and civilized race in their new home in the western hemisphere is quite clear. In the reign of the fifth monarch, Emer, the people had become strong and prosperous, "insomuch that they became exceedingly rich, having all manner of fruit and of grain and of silks and of fine linen, and of gold and of silver and of precious things; and also all manner of cattle and of oxen and

of cows and of sheep and of swine and of goats and also many other kind of animals which were useful for the food of man; and they also had horses and asses, and there were elephants, and cureloms and cumoms, all of which were useful unto man; * * * and thus the Lord did pour out his blessings upon this land [North America], which was choice above all other lands.”*

In the reigns of Riplakish and Morianton, their tenth and eleventh monarchs, respectively—there were twenty-eight legitimate kings in all, besides a number of usurpers who held authority for a season in the Jaredite nation—many spacious buildings were erected and many cities were built; and the people “became exceeding rich” under those reigns; while in the reign of the sixteenth monarch, Lib, they seemd to have reached a very high state of civilization, which extended over the “whole face of the land northward”:

They were exceedingly industrious, and they did buy and sell, and traffic one with another, that they might get gain. And they did work in all manner of ore, and they did make gold, and silver, and iron, and brass, and all manner of metals; and they did dig it out of the earth; wherefore they did cast up mighty heaps of earth to get ore, of gold, and silver, and of iron, and of copper. And they did work all manner of fine work. And they did have silks, and fine twined linen; and they did work all manner of cloth, that they might clothe themselves from their nakedness. And they did make all manner of tools to till the earth, * * * And they did make all manner of tools with which they did work their beasts. And they did make all manner of weapons of war. And they did work all manner of work of exceeding curious workmanship. And never could be a people more blessed than were they, and more prospered by the hand of the Lord.†

*Ether ix: 16-20.

†Ether x: 22-28.

This represents a people far advanced in civilization, in agriculture, in mining, in manufactures, and in the arts. This blessed condition was in fulfillment of the promise of the Lord; for when he called out of Babel Jared and his brother, Moriancumer, the Lord promised the latter that he would lead them "into a land which is choice above all the lands of the earth." "And there will I bless thee and thy seed," said the Lord, "and raise up unto me of thy seed, and of the seed of thy brother, and of them who shall go with thee, a great nation. And there shall be none greater than the nation which I shall raise up unto me of thy seed, upon all the face of the earth."^z

If we take this brief glimpse of the civilization of the Jaredite nation quoted above, and couple it with the promise of God to Moriancumer, we have every reason to believe that the Jaredites became a very great, prosperous, and powerful people. Their occupancy of the western world, however, was confined to the northern continent. Here their civilization rose, and here it fell, after enduring between fifteen and sixteen hundred years, if we accept the Hebrew chronology for the date of the confounding of language at Babel.

Numbers.

The number of Jaredites, of course, varied at different periods of their long national existence. In the reign of the fourth king, Omer, a grievous civil war broke out among them which "lasted for the space of many years," and led to "the destruction of nearly all the people of the kingdom."^a From time to time they were subject to these civil wars which very naturally checked the increase in their popula-

^zEther i: 42, 43.

^aEther ix.

tion. Still they became very numerous, sufficiently so, as already shown, to occupy an immense empire of country, extending from the Isthmus of Panama northward, including Central America, Mexico, thence northward to the great lakes, and from the eastern slopes of the Rocky mountains to the Atlantic Ocean. In their last great civil war, after it had raged many years, we are informed by the sacred historian that there had been slain by the sword "two millions of mighty men, and also their wives and their children."^b Upon which the late Orson Pratt remarks, in a foot note on the passage, that including the wives and children of the two millions of men who were slain, "the numbers would probably have been from ten to fifteen millions." Their numbers may have been even greater than this at other periods of their history.

Literature.

The Jaredites also had a literature. When the Nephite king Mosiah translated some of their records—the twenty-four plates of Ether, brought by Limhi's expedition from the land Desolation—it is stated that they gave an account not only of the people who were destroyed (the Jaredites) from the time they were destroyed back to the building of the great Tower at the time the Lord confounded the language of the people and scattered them abroad upon the face of the earth, but they also gave an account of events beyond that time "even up to the creation of Adam." It is only reasonable to conclude that the record engraven on gold plates by the last Jaredite historian, the prophet Ether, was but one of many such records among the Jaredites; for since they came from the Euphrates valley with a knowledge of

^bEther xv. and foot note "b" p. 606.

letters, there is nothing in their history which would lead us to suppose they lost that knowledge; but on the contrary everything to establish the fact that they continued in possession thereof; for not only was Ether, the last of their prophets, able to keep a record, but the last of their kings, Coriantumr, was able to write; for in the days of the Nephite king, Mosiah I., a large stone was brought to him with engravings on it which he interpreted by means of Urim and Thummim; and the record on the stone gave an account of Coriantumr, written by himself, and the slain of his people; and it also recorded a few words concerning his fathers and how his first parents came out from the Tower at the time the Lord confounded the language of the people. So that, from first to last, the Jaredites had a literature.

Government.

Before the demise of the two brothers, Moriancumer and Jared, who led the Jaredite colony to the western hemisphere, the people were called together and a kingly government founded. Monarchical government was not established without remonstrance from Moriancumer, who declared that such government would lead to the destruction of liberty.^c But Jared pleaded that the people might have the kind of government they desired, and proposed that they choose from among his own or his brother's sons the man they would have for king. The first choice of the people was Pagag the eldest son of Moriancumer; but influenced, doubtless by the desire of his father that some other form of government should be established, Pagag declined the kingly honor. So also several of the sons of Jared declined to serve in that office, perhaps for the same reason. Finally, how-

^cEther vi: 23.

ever, one of the sons of Jared, Orihah, accepted and was anointed king. The choice seems to have been a fortunate one, for it is said that Orihah walked humbly before the Lord and he remembered the great things the Lord had done for his fathers, as also did his people; and he executed judgment upon the land in righteousness all his days, and his days were many.^d Orihah was succeeded by his son Kib, in whose reign the first rebellion took place; for the son of Kib rebelled against him, and even imprisoned the king until another son born in the old age of the captive monarch gathered sufficient strength to reinstate his father upon his throne. This was the commencement of a long series of such rebellions in the Jaredite dynasty.

Of the nature of Jaredite government little can be learned beyond the fact that after the election of the first king, Orihah, the hereditary principle was recognized; and although there were frequent contestants for the throne, and occasional usurpations of the kingly authority, the legitimate line of hereditary monarchs seems to have been reasonably well maintained. It appears not to have been part of the constitution of the government, however, that the rights of heredity in the royal house should descend to the eldest son. It frequently happened that the son born in the old age of the reigning monarch succeeded to the kingly power, a course, which perhaps accounts for the occasional rebellions of their brothers, though the rights of the first born are never urged as the cause of the quarrels.

Of the subordinate officers of the kingdom nothing is said; by what means judicial powers were exercised we are not informed; what the nature of the military organization was, or what system of taxation was adopted, we do not

^dEther vi and vii.

know. On all these matters Moroni's abridgment of the record of Ether is silent.

Religion.

Relative to the religion that obtained among the Jaredites, we are left in well-nigh as much ignorance as we are concerning the nature of the subordinate feature of their government. The two brothers, Moriancumer and Jared, seem to have been among the righteous people of Babel; so much so in fact that Moriancumer was a very great prophet of God, and had direct access to the source of revelation; for by revelation he learned of God's intention to confound the language of the people, and thus stop the impious work in which they were engaged, when building the city of Babel and its tower. It is in consequence of their high favor with God that the language of these brothers and that of their friends was preserved; and they with their families and friends, led away to "a land which was choice above all other lands," where God fulfilled his promise to make of them a great nation. It is doubtful if a prophet ever lived in ancient times who held more direct communion with God than did this prophet Moriancumer. It will be remembered that he took into the mountain sixteen transparent stones, which he had prepared, and asked God to make them luminous; that in the journey of the colony across the great deep in the eight barges that had been prepared, they might not be in darkness. As the Lord stretched forth his hand to touch the stones, in compliance with the prophet's request, the veil was taken from the eyes of Moriancumer, and he saw the finger of God, and fell prostrate before him in fear. But even his fear could not crush his faith. He so far prevailed with God through faith that he beheld him face to face, and talked with him as a man speaks with his friend. That is, he saw

and talked with the pre-existent spirit of the Lord Jesus, for the Lord said to him: "This body which ye now behold is the body of my spirit. * * * and even as I appear unto thee to be in the spirit, will I appear unto my people in the flesh." A greater revelation of God than this, previous to the coming of the Lord Jesus in the flesh, no other prophet ever received. Moreover Jesus said to him: "Because of thy faith, thou hast seen that I shall take upon me flesh and blood. * * * Behold, I am he who was prepared from the foundation of the world to redeem my people; behold, I am Jesus Christ. In me shall all mankind have light, and that eternally, even those who believe on my name; and they shall become my sons and my daughters. * * * Seest thou that thou art created after mine image, yea, all men were created in the beginning after mine own image."^e

Moriancumer was commanded not to suffer the things he had seen and heard to be revealed to the world until the Lord Jesus should have lived in the flesh. He was commanded, however, to write what he had both seen and heard, and seal it up that it might be preserved to come forth in due time to the children of men. In addition to the revelation of His own person to him, the Lord revealed to the prophet Moriancumer "all the inhabitants of the earth which had been, and also all that would be; and he withheld them not from his sight, even unto the ends of the earth." While Moriancumer was prohibited from making known to his people the great things thus revealed to him, his knowledge of the things of God must have given him wonderful power and influence in teaching his people the righteous truths which are fundamental and universal. This confidence and strength must also have been imparted to others, for certain it is that the Jaredites had prophets of great power sent to them from

^eEther iii.

time to time to teach and reprove them; and even some of their monarchs were shining examples of spiritual power and righteousness. The fifth monarch, Emer, possessed such faith that he, like Moriancumer, had the blessed privilege of seeing "the Son of Righteousness, and did rejoice and glory in his day."^f And of the whole people it is said, "never could [there] be a people more blessed than were they, and more prospered by the hand of the Lord."^g All of which is good evidence that the Jaredites at this time (in the reign of Lib, the sixteenth monarch) were a righteous people; and this righteousness was doubtless brought about by the preaching of faith in God and his laws as only Moriancumer and other prophets whom God raised up to the Jaredite nation could preach it. But it was with the Jaredites as with other nations. Their righteousness was not continuous, and it is more than likely that their faith ebbed and flowed as the faith of all people seems to ebb and flow. There were times when the prophets of God were rejected; when their severest warnings of coming calamities seemed to produce no effect. In the reign of Com and Shiblom,^h the twenty-first and twenty-second monarchs of the Jaredites, respectively, a great calamity befell the people, and the prophets seized upon this circumstance to declare that even greater destruction should befall them, and predicted that "the bones of the Jaredites should become a heap of earth upon the face of the land except they should repent of their wickedness." This declaration, so far from bringing the people to repentance, filled them with rage against the prophets, and they sought to destroy them. Even the priesthood itself seems at

^fEther ix: 22.

^gIbid. x: 28.

^hThe orthography of the word cannot be determined, it is spelled "Shiblom" in the passage above and Shiblun in another.

times to have become corrupted; for in the closing years of the monarchy, in the reign of Coriantumr, the high priest is charged with murdering one Gilead as the latter sat upon his throne.

Beyond these few facts nothing can be learned from the abridged record of the Jaredites concerning the religion of that people, except that unto some of their prophets, just previous to the destruction of both the nation and the people, was revealed the fact, that, unless the Jaredites repented, "the Lord God would execute judgment against them to their utter destruction, and that he would bring forth another people to possess the land, after the manner in which he had brought forth their fathers from Babel. Unto Ether, the last of the Jaredite prophets, the son of Coriantor, the last king but one of the Jaredites, the same truth was revealed. To him, also, was shown the days of Christ; and it was revealed to him that upon this blessed land of the western hemisphere would be built up to the remnant of the house of Joseph, a Holy City, to be called New Jerusalem,ⁱ or Zion; a city of refuge for the righteous in the last days. These prophecies, I am aware, throw no light upon the nature of the Jaredite religion, but they do establish the fact that God sent forth inspired men among them, to warn them of the calamities that were decreed against them because of their decline from righteousness; and that fact is an important religious truth.

History.

We have in the Book of Mormon but the merest outline of the history of the Jaredites; and this outline is learned from the abridgment made by Moroni, of the Book of Ether.

ⁱEther xiii.

Ether was the last of the Jaredite prophets, and witnessed the destruction of the race. His record, the Book of Ether, was engraven upon twenty-four plates of gold, found by the Nephites in the second century B. C., and finally abridged by Moroni, and made a part of the Book of Mormon, which abridgment Joseph Smith translated into the English language. It stands to reason that the record of Ether, even if we had it in full, since it consisted of but twenty-four plates, could be but a very incomplete and imperfect history of so great a people and of so long a period of time—extending through sixteen centuries. Yet in the Book of Mormon there is but an abridgment of Ether's record; and that abridgment so brief that Moroni, in speaking of it, says that he had not written an hundredth part of it.^j So it is not to be wondered at that the description of the Jaredite government and civilization is so very unsatisfactory. But while all this is admitted, the fact is revealed, in Moroni's abridgment of Ether's record, that from something like twenty-two hundred years before Christ, to some six hundred years before Christ, the North continent of the western world was occupied by a civilized race of people, and that a mighty nation dwell upon that land through all these centuries; a nation at times highly favored of God, and this because of their righteousness; and then again reduced well nigh to anarchy, with their civilization bordering upon dissolution in consequence of great wickedness and misrule; emphasizing the great truth, to which the history of all nations bears witness, that "righteousness exalteth a nation, while sin is a reproach to any people." And this is much, and perhaps the sum-total to be learned from the history of nations.

Naturally one is tempted to draw a parallel between this old American nation and various other nations in the old

^jEther xv: 33.

world which paralleled its existence. Surely it is interesting to think that while empires were founding in Assyria and Egypt and Babylon; that while Greece was passing through her heroic ages, in the western world also an enlightened race was building up a national existence and struggling with those problems which through all times and among all people engage the intelligent attention of mankind. Also it would be interesting to note that about the time of the capture of Nineveh, which marked the fall of the Assyrian empire, and but a little before the destruction of the kingdom of Judah, here in our western world an empire which had endured the storms of ages was passing away. Still the main fact to be kept in mind in this work is that such a nation, coeval with the old empires of the eastern world, and with a civilization no less magnificent, existed according to the Book of Mormon in our great northern continent, with its centre of civilization in that part of the continent we call Central America. Proof of the existence of such an empire, of such a civilization, and having such a location will be strong collateral evidence for the truth of the Book of Mormon.

II. THE NEPHITES.

Lehi's Colony.

Lehi was one of the many prophets at Jerusalem who predicted the calamities which befell the Jewish nation on the second invasion of Judea by King Nebuchadnezzar, early in the sixth century B. C.^k Lehi incurred the wrath of that

^kThe story of Zedekiah's reign in Jerusalem, the conditions that obtained among the people, and the warnings which God sent by many prophets (Lehi among the rest) is thus old in II. Chronicles, chapter xxxvi; "Zedekiah was one and twenty years old when he began to reign; and reigned eleven years in Jerusa-

ungodly people and was warned of God in a vision to depart from Jerusalem with his family, and was also promised that inasmuch as he would keep the commandments of God he should be led to a land of promise.¹ From the wilderness where Lehi temporarily dwelt, two expeditions to the fated city were made by his sons: one to obtain a genealogy of his fathers, and the Jewish scriptures (which resulted also in adding one more to the colony in the person of Zoram, a servant of Laban, a keeper of the Jewish records); the second, to induce one Ishmael and his family to join Lehi's colony in their exodus from Jerusalem and journey to the promised land. In both of these expeditions they were successful in achieving their object. The colony now consisted of some eighteen adult persons and a number of children.

From the Book of Mormon and the word of the Lord to the Prophet Joseph Smith it is learned that Lehi's colony traversed from Jerusalem, nearly a southeast direction, until they came to the nineteenth degree north latitude; thence nearly east to the sea of Arabia. Here the colony built a ship in which to cross the great waters, which sep-

lem. And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord his God, and humbled not himself before Jeremiah the prophet, speaking from the mouth of the Lord. And he also rebelled against king Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him swear by God; but he stiffened his neck, and hardened his heart from turning unto the Lord God of Israel. Moreover, all the chief of the priests, and the people, transgressed very much, after all the abominations of the heathen and polluted the house of the Lord which he had hallowed in Jerusalem. And the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling places: But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy."

¹I. Nephi ii: 20.

^oSee synopsis First Book Nephi, Heading Chapter i.

^mRichards' and Little's Compendium, p. 289; I Nephi xvi: 13 14, 43. Also chapter xvii: 1.

arated them from the land of promise. They sailed in a southeasterly direction, and landed on the continent of South America, in about thirty degrees south latitude.

From Jerusalem their journey to the promised land is supposed to have occupied about twelve years.⁹ On their arrival at the land of promise, the colony went forth upon it, and began to till the earth. The seeds brought from the land of Jerusalem were planted and thrived exceedingly well. The colony also found the land of promise well furnished with beasts of every kind; with the cow, the ass, the horse, the goat, and all manner of wild animals which were for the use of man. They also found all manner of ore, especially gold, silver, and copper. Here they dwelt for some time in prosperity, but scarcely in peace; for there were dissensions in the colony. The elder sons of Lehi, Laman and Lemuel, were of a jealous and skeptical turn of mind; and from the beginning had little faith in the visions of their father, and the prophecies concerning the destruction of Jerusalem. Nephi, the younger brother, on the other hand, was a man of profound faith in his father's revelations, and in the things of God, and sought for a personal knowledge of the things revealed. This knowledge he received through the revelations of God, which, coupled with the native qualities that go to the making of a leader of men, he became, even before the death of his father, the real head of the community. This aroused the displeasure and even hatred of the elder brothers, who, on various occasions sought his overthrow and even his life. This division between the sons of Lehi extended also to the community, and made a division of the colony ultimately inevitable. Accordingly, after some years spent

⁹Richards and Little's Compendium, p. 289.

ⁿReynolds, B. M. Chronology, Richards and Little's Compendium, p. 289.

upon the promised land, Nephi was warned by the Lord to depart from his elder brothers into the wilderness, with all those whom he could persuade to go with him. Neither the distance nor the direction of this first remove of the righteous part of the colony from the more wicked part, can be definitely determined from the Book of Mormon, except from the location of the people of Nephi in subsequent times; and as this location was far northward from their first place of landing, it is generally supposed that this first remove was northward. Perhaps at the first the partisans of the elder brothers were well contented to be relieved of the presence of the younger brother and his following; but for no great length of time; for they followed in their wake, and before forty years had passed away (supposedly from the time that Lehi's colony left Jerusalem; and if so then twenty-eight years from their landing in the western hemisphere) the two divisions of the colony had wars and contentions with each other.

Nephi, as would reasonably be expected, took with him the Jewish scriptures which had been brought from Jerusalem, the genealogy of his fathers, together with all the records kept upon the journey to the promised land. Nephi's policy tended to civilization; for he taught his people to erect buildings, "and to work all manner of wood and of iron and of copper and of brass and of steel and of gold and of silver and of precious ores, which were in great abundance." He also built a temple, somewhat after the pattern of the temple of Solomon, and ordained as priests his two younger brothers, Jacob and Joseph, born to Lehi in the wilderness, after the departure of the colony from Jerusalem.

Notwithstanding the protests of Nephi against such a proceeding his people insisted upon his becoming their king,

an office he discharged all his days purely in the interest of his people. His policy inculcated industry and encouragement of arts and civilization. Knowing, however, the implacable hatred of his elder brothers, Nephi did not fail to make preparations for vigorous defense in the event of war, and accordingly manufactured both arms and armor for his people. In consequence of the high esteem in which Nephi was held, the kings of the Nephites thereafter took the name of Nephi, as their official or regal name, and were distinguished by being called II. Nephi, III. Nephi, IV. Nephi, and so following.

While the course of Nephi and his people tended to the establishment of civilization, the course of the elder brothers and their following tended to barbarism. They delighted in idleness; and as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind; and a curse fell upon them, even the curse of a dark skin, so that they became loathsome in appearance as in habits. As the followers of Nephi took upon them the name of their leader and were called Nephites, so, in course of time, the followers of the older brothers took the name of their leader and were called Lamanites, after Laman, the eldest son of Lehi; hence two people from Lehi's colony, Nephites and Lamanites. The Lamanites lived upon the fruits of the chase, hence were nomadic and predatory in their habits. They were full of envy, strife, malice; they were fierce, warlike, murderous. Between these two peoples there was almost constant warfare. The Lamanites the more fierce and numerous; the Nephites fewer in number, but better armed, and protected by armor; the former were the aggressors, the latter acted on the defensive, and usually were conscious of the better cause. At times, however, the Nephites lapsed into wickedness and on such occasion the Lamanites truly were a scourge

unto them, in fulfillment of God's word to that effect.^q A particularly severe judgment is said to have overtaken the Nephites in the first quarter of the fourth century from the time Lehi left Jerusalem, in which the more wicked part of the people were destroyed. Some time in the fourth century from the time Lehi left Jerusalem occurred also a second great removal of righteous Nephites from the midst of their brethren and the Lamanites. The first separation in Lehi's colony, it will be remembered, was made under the I. Nephi. The second was made under the prophet-king known as I. Mosiah, and resulted in the Nephites finding the people of Zarahemla, of which more hereafter.

It is supposed that the first remove of the Nephites from their brethren covered no great distance; as only a few years passed before they were in contact with each other again, at least in warfare. Indeed Elder George Reynolds, in his Dictionary of the Book of Mormon, holds to the theory that there may have been several removals of the Nephites between their first separation from the Lamanites under the First Nephi, and the very noted hegira under Mosiah I., about the fourth century of the Nephite annals. The author of the Dictionary urges as the reasons for his theory that it would be inconsistent with the story of the record (Book of Mormon), and with good judgment, to believe that in their first journey the Nephites traveled as far north as they were found four hundred years later,^s when the very noted remove was made under Mosiah I. I believe the reasons of Elder Reynolds are quite sufficient for his theory. The movements of the Nephites were most probably as follows: What-

^pII. Nephi v: 22-25.

^qBook of Omni iv: 7.

^rThat is, four hundred years from the time Lehi left Jerusalem the latter event being 600 B. C.

^sDict. of B. of M., Art. Nephi, Land of p. 295.

ever of conquest was made by the Lamanites upon Nephite possessions, during the first four centuries of their occupancy of the promised land, was made upon their southern borders. On the other hand the Nephite settlements were extended on that side of their possessions least likely to be assailed by their enemies, where there was least danger, that is, on the north. These two circumstances combined to give their colonization movement a northerly direction; until about the close of the fourth Nephite century they are supposed to have been in possession of that part of the continent of South America corresponding to the country now called Ecuador.[†] This country that the Nephites occupied at the close of the fourth century of their annals, as also that which they had slowly colonized, and from time to time abandoned to their enemies—the whole distance from the place selected by the First Nephi after separating from his brothers to the place they occupied at the close of the fourth century of their annals—this whole country—the Nephites called the Land of Nephi, or the Land of their father's first inheritance.[‡]

The story of the second great hegira of righteous Nephites from their less righteous brethren is a very brief one. It was undertaken in response to a warning and commandment of God to one Mosiah, who is celebrated in Nephite history as the first king of what I shall call the Nephite-Zarahemla nation—Mosiah I. How great the distance covered in this second great hegira of the Nephites may not be definitely determined; but later a colony under conditions somewhat similar, that is, encumbered with women and

[†]Such is the theory of Orson Pratt—see note “g,” Book of Omni.

[‡]II. Nephi v: 8, Omni. i: 12, 27. Mos. vii. Mos. ix:1. See collection of ref. under “b.” II. Nephi v.

children, flocks, herds, and quantities of grain, etc., covered practically the same journey in about twenty-two days, in two separate stages; one of eight and the other of fourteen days.^v

Mosiah's people, when they reached the great and beautiful valley drained by what was subsequently called among the Nephites the river Sidon,^w found it inhabited by a numerous people, whose chief city was named (at least from that time forth) Zarahemla. At this point it becomes necessary to suspend the account of Mosiah's people in order to say a word of the people inhabiting the valley of the Sidon, for they are the descendants of the third colony which, according to the Book of Mormon, came to the land of promise.

Mulek's Colony.

According to the Bible narrative of King Zedekiah's reign, when Jerusalem fell into the hands of the king of Babylon (588 B. C.), King Zedekiah himself well-nigh made his escape. For when the city was broken up, and all the men of war fled by night, by the way of the gate between two walls, which is by the king's garden, the king went the way toward the plain. But his flight being betrayed by an enemy among his own people,^x the army of the Chaldeans pursued Zedekiah early in the morning and overtook him in the plain near Jericho. The king's army was scattered from

^vSee Mosiah xxiii: 1-5, 19. Also Mos. xxiv: 20, 24. Also foot note "t" in ch. xxiv, by Orson Pratt; and Dict. of B. of M. pp. 198, 199.

^wIt is generally supposed that this River Sidon is identical with the River Magdalena in the northern part of South America. (See Dictionary of Book of Mormon, p. 339, and Orson Pratt's note "g," Alma ii; 15).

^xJosephus, Antiq. Bk. X, viii.

him at the time he was captured; for "those friends and captains of Zedekiah who had fled out of the city with him, when they saw their enemies near them, they left him, and dispersed themselves, some one way and some another, and every one resolved to save himself; so the enemy took Zedekiah alive, when he was deserted by all but a few, with his children and his wives."^y The unfortunate king was taken before the king of Babylon, whose headquarters were then at Riblah, in Syria, where "they gave judgment upon him." The sons of Zedekiah were slain in his presence; after which his eyes were put out; he was bound in fetters and carried to Babylon, where subsequently he died. But among the king's friends who escaped were a number who carried with them one of Zedekiah's sons, named Mulek; and according to the Book of Mormon, this company "journeyed in the wilderness and were brought by the hand of the Lord across the great waters,"^z into the western hemisphere. It is learned by an incidental remark in the Book of Mormon that the colony of Mulek landed somewhere in the north continent of the western hemisphere; and for that reason the north continent was called Mulek, by the Nephites; and the south continent, Lehi; and this for the reason that the Lord brought the colonies bearing these names to the north and south land^a respectively. How many years the colony of Mulek traveled, and in what direction, cannot be learned from the Book of Bormon. But it is quite evident that they landed in the north continent of the western world, most likely in the southern part of that continent, say in the region

^yJosephus, *Antiq.*, Bk. X, Ch. viii. See also II. Kings, Ch. xxv.

^zOmni i: 14-17.

^aHelaman vi: 10.

of what is known in modern times as Central America.^b Thence they drifted southward to the valley of the Sidon, where they were found by the migrating hosts of Nephites under Mosiah.

It was a Nephite custom to call their cities and even their villages after the name of him who founded them.^c Thus the first city founded by the first Nephi, was called "Nephi," or "the City of Nephi;" the city founded by Melek was called "the City of Melek;" and so following. From this custom arose another, that of naming large districts of country after the chief city therein: thus the country in which the city of Nephi was located was called "the land of Nephi;" the country surrounding the city of Melek was called the land of Melek; see also "the land of Gideon;" the "land of Ammonihah," etc. Following this custom, when the migrating Nephites under Mosiah came into the valley of Sidon, and found the chief man of its principal city to be named Zarahemla, they straightway called the city "The City of Zarahemla;" and ever afterwards among them the surrounding country was "the land of Zarahemla."

Mulek's colony—the name is derived from that of the young prince it carried with it, not because he was really the leader of the colony, but doubtless out of a sense of loyalty and national pride on the part of those who would regard themselves as being entrusted by Providence with the fortunes of a prince of Israel—Mulek's colony, I repeat, in their hurried flight from Judea brought no records with

^bThis is upon the supposition that what is known among the Nephites especially as the land "Desolation," in contradistinction to the Nephite land "Bountiful," is identical with the region known to moderns as Central America; and the consideration of Alma xxii; 29-33. See also Dict. B. of M., p. 110.

^cAlma viii:7.

them, no scriptures, no genealogies. The circumstances under which they made their escape from the Babylonians considered, it is not difficult to understand that records, scriptures, concerned them not at all. Flight, escape alone occupied their thoughts. In consequence of having no records, no written language of any kind, their language was much changed in the course of the centuries that had elapsed since their departure from Judea. So much so, in fact, that the Nephites could not understand them; neither could the people of Zarahemla understand the Nephites, until instructed by the latter in the Nephite tongue. Moreover; having been without both written scriptures and a living priesthood for centuries, Zarahemla's people not only no longer believed in God, but denied even the existence of a Creator. In a word, through ignorance and the demoralizing influence to contentions and internecine wars, they had deteriorated to semi-civilized and irreligious conditions. All this, however, in the course of time was changed. The people of Zarahemla soon learned the Nephite language, it being a language akin, of course, to their own. They were also taught in the Nephite faith; and instructed in the scriptures which Lehi's colony had brought with them from Jerusalem, and which Mosiah had brought with him in his northward journey. The happiest results followed this union of the two peoples. The people of Mosiah were so augmented in numbers by the addition of their new found friends that they could feel secure from aggressions of the Lamanites, who, in time, might follow them; and on the other hand, to the people of Zarahemla the Nephites brought the knowledge of God; a true priesthood; the scriptures of their forefathers; government; civilization. These two peoples, really of the same race, be it remembered, readily united under the Nephite form of government, a limited, and at times elective, monarchy;

Mosiah, the Nephite leader, notwithstanding the people of Zarahemla were the more numerous, being chosen king.

The colony of Mulek previous to their removal southward from the place of their first landing, were visited by the sole survivor of the Jaredite race, Coriantumr, who resided some nine months with them before his demise.

Shortly after the arrival of the Nephites under Mosiah in Zarahemla, a large stone with engravings upon it was brought to the king; and Mosiah I., being a Seer, translated the engravings upon the stone and learned that they gave an account of Coriantumr, whom Mulek's colony found; and of his forefathers who came from the tower of Babel, at the confusion of languages; and of the goodness and severity of God upon them; and of the destruction that befell them because of their wickedness.^d Afterwards a more perfect knowledge of the Jaredites was obtained through the twenty-four plates of Ether, found by Limhi's expedition into the north land (noted before);^e and which were translated by King Mosiah II., who was also a seer.^f

The colony of Mulek was touched by the other two peoples who had been brought by the providences of God to the western hemisphere; the Jaredite race through its sole survivor, Coriantumr; and the Nephite race through the people of Mosiah I. It should be remarked of these three people that they were really of a common race. The two brothers who had led the colony from the Tower of Babel, Jared and Moriancumr, were doubtless descendants of Shem, the son of Noah.^g The colony of Mulek was unquestionably made up of Jews, hence descendants of Shem; Lehi's colony

^dOmni i: 20-22.

^eMosiah viii: 7-14; and Mosiah xxviii.

^fSee page 118.

^gSee Dictionary of B. of M. (Reynolds), p. 165 et seq.

was made up of descendants of Manasseh and Ephraim,¹ sons of Joseph, the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham, who was a direct descendant of Shem.²

Thus eventually the races which, according to the Book of Mormon, have been brought to the western hemisphere under the providences of God, are traceable to one source, to one race; and may be expected to possess certain qualities which will be in harmony with the fact of racial unity.

¹Lehi is plainly declared to be of the stock of Manasseh, (Alma x; 3); and it is supposed that Ishmael and his family who joined Lehi and his family in the journey to the promised land were of the tribe of Ephraim (See Dict. Book of Mormon, p. 155, Art. Ishmael). There are promises respecting Ephraim which cannot be realized except through the seed of Ephraim dwelling upon the land of America. See Orson Pratt's Works, "Prophetic Evidences of the Book of Mormon.")

²See Gen. xi.