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Chapter LXIX

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CHAPTER LXIX.

NEPHI IN THE HANDS OF THE LAMANITES—THE LANDS OF SHEMLON, SHILOM, HELAM, AMULON, ISHMAEL, MIDDONI, JERUSALEM, ETC.

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. This prophecy was completely fulfilled, if not on previous occasions, 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.

From that 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; reference to them 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, bloodthirsty 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 by 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. In the next generation king Noah caused many fine buildings and towers to be built in both the lands of Lehi-Nephi and Shilom.

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 Noah's tower, mentioned in our last chapter. Its relative could not have been so completely viewed from King 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 Zarahemlaite, and his company entered in that way, and Limhi and his people escaped in the same direction.

The next city that we read of is called Helam. It was located eight days' journey 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, 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. 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.

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

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

Shilom and Shemlon we have already shewn to be in the neighborhood of Lehi-Nephi; Helam, eight days' journey for loaded teams to the north, and

Amulon not far distant therefrom. We may next inquire what can be learned of the lands of Jerusalem, Ishmael and Middoni.

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. There, 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.

There 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. A stagnant sea, akin to that which covers Sodom and Gomorrah, occupies the place where once its proud places and rich synagogues stood.

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 travel-

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