



Type: Book Chapter

Chapter VIII

Author(s): George Reynolds

Source: *The Story of the Book of Mormon*

Published: Salt Lake City; Joseph Hyrum Parry, 1888

Pages: 68-71

Abstract: Jarom—Omni—Amaron—Chemish—Abinadom—Amaleki—Mosiah—Review of Nephite History for Four Hundred Years

amongst others, that the Lord would preserve the holy records and bring them forth unto the Lamanites in his own due time. Of these things Enos gladly testified to the people, going about in their midst, prophesying of the mighty events yet in the future, and bearing record of that which he had both seen and heard.

CHAPTER VIII.

JAROM — OMNI — AMARON — CHEMISH — ABINADOM — AMALEKI
— MOSIAH — REVIEW OF NEPHITE HISTORY FOR FOUR
HUNDRED YEARS.

THE days of the prophet Jarom were neither few nor unimportant. During the sixty years that he had charge of the holy things (B. C. 422 to B. C. 362) the Nephites may be said to have grown from a powerful tribe to a wealthy, though not as yet very numerous, nation. Indeed, their numbers were far from being equal to those of the wild and bloodthirsty Lamanites. The latter, like their descendants of to-day, spent their time almost exclusively in the chase of wild animals and in war; yet, notwithstanding their vigorous and repeated onslaughts, the age of Jarom was to the Nephites one of marked progress in the arts of peace.

They ceased to be entirely a pastoral people. They gave much attention to the adornment of their homes and public buildings with fine and curious work in wood and metal. Agriculture and manufacture received a new impetus by the invention of various labor-saving machines, implements and tools. Their safety

from successful attack from the Lamanites was also measurably secured by the introduction of more perfect weapons of war, and the development of a rude system of fortification, sufficient, however, to protect their cities and settlements from the means of attack at the command of their foes.

Though the Nephites of this age were stiffnecked and perverse, requiring the constant warnings of prophets to keep them from backsliding, yet the pervading tone of their society was simple and unaffected, and the people were generally industrious, honest and moral. They neither blasphemed nor profaned the holy name of the Deity, they kept sacred the Sabbath day, and strictly observed the law of Moses. Their prophets, priests and teachers not only instructed them in this law, but also expounded the intent for which it was given, and while so doing, directed their minds to the coming of the Messiah, in whom they taught the people to believe as though he had already come. These pointed and constant teachings preserved the Nephites from destruction, by softening their hearts and bringing them to repentance, when war, wealth or pride had exerted its baneful influences.

Shortly before Jarom died he delivered the sacred plates to his son Omni. Omni kept them for about forty-four years and then handed them to his son Amaron; who in turn transferred them to his brother Chemish. Chemish, when his end drew near, placed them in the hands of his son Abinadom, who afterwards gave them in charge of his son Amaleki.

It is very little that we know of the history of the Nephites from the death of Jarom to the time of Amaleki, a period of about one hundred and

fifty years. The political records of the nation were engraved on other plates, which were kept by the kings, and as there was little that they felt it necessary to write beyond what Nephi and Jacob had written, their records are very short. From what little we can glean from these writings it is evident that during this era the Nephites had frequent wars with the Lamanites, in many of which they suffered severely.

The Lord permitted these wild sons of the wilderness to be a constant scourge to the people of Nephi when they turned away from him; and we fear that the seasons were not unfrequent when they had to be reminded of their duty in this terrible way. It also seems probable that, to avoid the constant incursions of the warriors of the house of Laman, the Nephites had more than once forsaken their homes and retired farther northward into the wilderness. We judge this from the fact that in the days of Amaleki, the land of Nephi appears to have been in or near the region we call Ecuador, a country far distant from the place where Lehi's colony first landed; and it is scarcely consistent with the narrative of the Book of Mormon to believe that Nephi and his little band, when they first separated from their brethren, made a journey of so many hundreds of miles before they established their homes. Then the very fact that the Lamanites almost immediately began to harass them in the new land which they occupied is strong evidence that their first removal was not so distant but that these enemies could, without great difficulty, reach them, a thing that would have been almost impossible if they had gone directly to the far distant region of Ecuador.

We now come to the days of the first Mosiah. But before relating the story of his life and reign we will briefly summarize what we know of the history of the Nephites during the first three or four hundred years of their national existence.

They were governed by kings who were the direct descendants of Nephi. These kings were, as a rule, righteous men and wise rulers. The law of Moses was strictly observed, and other good and just laws were enacted to regulate those matters which the Mosaic law did not touch.

The Nephites multiplied greatly, and also grew exceedingly rich in the wealth of this world; while their artisans and mechanics were very expert in the arts and manufactures. They also spread abroad on the face of the land of Nephi and were much scattered.

The Lamanites followed them from the land of their first possession, and were constantly harassing them by incursions and invasions, which led to numerous and bloody wars. These were sometimes very disastrous to the Nephites.

Spiritually, the Nephites had many seasons of faithfulness to God when they listened to and obeyed the words of his prophets; and, unfortunately, they had also many seasons of apostasy, at which times the judgments of God fell upon them; the Lamanites being often used by him as a sharp instrument to bring them to repentance and reformation.