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## Some Prophecies Concerning the Book of Mormon

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"I remember hearing related Brother Parley P. Pratt's first interview with the Saints at Fayette, Seneca County, where the Church was organized. \* \* \* On that occasion he was called upon to speak. \* \* \* He brought forth from the prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and other prophets abundant proofs concerning the work which the Lord had established through his servant Joseph. A great many of the Latter-day Saints were surprised that there were so many evidences in the Bible concerning this work."—George Q. Cannon; *Jour. of Dis.*, Vol. 19, p. 105.



## CHAPTER TEN

### SOME PROPHECIES CONCERNING THE BOOK OF MORMON

**A** STUDENT of the Scriptures, naturally, asks whether there is anything in the Bible, any prophetic utterance, which points to the coming forth of the Book of Mormon in the latter days. That is a legitimate question that should have due consideration.

**ARIEL.** Possibly one of the best known Old-Testament prophecies concerning the Book of Mormon is that of Isaiah, 29:1-14: "Woe to Ariel, to Ariel, the city where David dwelt! \* \* \* Yet will I distress Ariel, and there shall be heaviness and sorrow: and it shall be unto me as Ariel."

Two Ariels are here mentioned. One is the city where David dwelt; that is to say, Jerusalem in Palestine. The Lord, through the prophet, says this Ariel, this "lion of the Lord," should pass through heaviness and sorrow and, finally, become, in the sight of the Lord, as another Ariel: "It [the first-mentioned Ariel] shall be *unto me* as Ariel [the second.]"

The prophet goes on to state in what respect the fate of Ariel, where David dwelt, should resemble that of the other Ariel: "Thou shalt be brought down, and shalt speak out of the ground," etc. That, then, must have happened to another Ariel; otherwise there would be no point of resemblance.

If we remember that the Lamanites, about 100, B. C., built a city which they called Jerusalem (Alma



21:2),<sup>1</sup> which was destroyed at the time of the crucifixion (3 Ne. 9:7), the prophecy of Isaiah becomes clear. It says in plain language that, as the Lamanite city was wiped out, so would the city of David be destroyed, as actually happened about 40 years later, or in the year 70, A. D.

The prophet says: "Thou shalt be brought down and shalt speak out of the ground \* \* \* and thy speech shall whisper out of the dust." That refers, literally, to the cities, which were destroyed. They spoke "out of the dust" through their records that were deposited in the hill Cumorah. How could a nation, after it had become almost extinct, speak out of the ground or "whisper out of the dust," if not through some record deposited, as was the Book of Mormon?

Isaiah makes the meaning of this vision so clear that it need not be misunderstood. He speaks of a book, or rather *the* book, for the Hebrew text has the definite article, to which the translators have not

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<sup>1</sup>The Nahua city of *Cholula* (also spelled *Chorula*), it has been thought, was so named after the City of Jerusalem. If so, it may have been named in memory of the Jerusalem which is mentioned in the Book of Mormon and which was submerged. Bancroft (*Native Races*, Vol. 5, p. 200), says the pyramid of Cholula was erected under the direction of a chief named Xelhua, and that the occasion was connected in some way with a flood, either as a memorial of a former flood or as a place of refuge in case another deluge should come.

In referring the motto of Cortez (*Judicium Domini Apprehendit Eos*) to the destruction of Jerusalem, we must suppose, says Lord Kingsborough, that he recognized in Mexico a *second Jerusalem*, and in his own conquests a triumph over the Hebrews of the New World, as Titus had before vanquished those of the Old. (From *Mex. Ant.*, quoted by Mrs. Simon, *The Ten Tribes*, p. 65.) No matter what value we may place on the stupendous work of which that of Mrs. Simon is but a partial copy, we must admit that this statement is a confirmation, from an outside source, of the view taken by Latter-day Saint writers on the passage of Isaiah on the two Ariels, or Jerusalems.



given the full force; he speaks of *the* book that was sealed, "which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot, for it is sealed." This book was also, as the prophet says, "delivered to him that is not learned," and he could not read it.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, "Behold," saith the Lord, "I will proceed to do a marvelous work among this people; even a marvelous work and a wonder; for the wisdom of the wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid." (V. 14.) And in that day, we read further, "shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see \* \* \* the meek also shall increase their joy in the Lord, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One in Israel." (V. 18, 19.)

"In that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book." What do you mean, Isaiah? He means the book he had just been speaking about in the 11th-14th verses. "And the vision \* \* \* men shall be hid." Here we perceive the nature of the book that he mentions in the 18th verse, and we learn something about the way that it was to be brought forth; that the words of the book, not the plates themselves, not the original, but the transcript, a copy of the words, the words of the book would be delivered to the learned, requesting them to read it." —Orson Pratt, July 18, 1875; *Jour of Dis.*, Vol. 4, p. 163.

### THE TWO STICKS. The prophet Ezekiel is

<sup>2</sup>Some tell us that "the book" does not mean a particular book but any book, or rather letter. But that is absurd. Even an illiterate individual would not ask a scholarly friend to read a sealed letter, and he would certainly not afterwards ask one who, like himself, had never mastered the art of reading, to read the letter which the scholar could not read. If the prophecy does not refer to some such event as the coming forth of the Book of Mormon and the presentation of the characters to the two scholars, it has no known fulfilment whatever.



commanded to take one stick and write upon it, "For Judah," and another and write upon it, "For Joseph," and join them together; and, when asked for the meaning of this symbolical act, he was to say: "Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel, his fellows, and will put them with him, even with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in my hand. \* \* \* Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel." (Ezek. 37: 15-28.)

The prophet here predicts the final union of the "whole house of Israel"—Judah and Ephraim—and the establishment of the everlasting covenant of peace, and says this restoration is to be preceded by the joining together of the records of the two divisions of the people. The Old Testament is the record of Judah. It came to us through the efforts of the Jews. The Book of Mormon is, more particularly, the record of Israel. In the coming forth of the Book of Mormon the prediction is fulfilled.

"Now, my friends, you may go to work, with all your Christian benevolent societies, to gather the Jews from the nations; you may combine all the wisdom and learning of Christendom, and put all the funds they can rake and scrape together from the two hemispheres of the earth, and after all, you never can accomplish the gathering and restitution of Israel until the Lord does it in his own way, by uniting the records of Judah and Joseph to accomplish this work. Then, and not



till then, will the house of Jacob rejoice in the Holy One of Israel, and no more be ashamed."—Orson Pratt, Jan. 7, 1855; *Jour. of Dis.*, Vol. 2, p. 291.

A LITTLE BOOK OPEN. Turning, now, to the great prophetic book of the New Testament, the Revelation by John, we pause at the tenth chapter.

In the preceding chapter John saw the countries where the church of our Lord was first established swept as with a besom of destruction, because of the general apostasy. The children of men were destroyed by the terrible weapons of the invading hordes, but the rest of the men, which were not killed, "yet repented not," but continued to worship "idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood." Naturally, the question arose in the mind of the seer, What about the church? Is this the end of it? Was the glorious structure that was filled with the Spirit of God on the day of Pentecost to be destroyed in a flood of apostasy and carnage? In answer to such questions, John received the wonderful vision recorded in chapter ten.

In this vision, John saw a mighty angel, or messenger,<sup>3</sup> come from heaven. This messenger was clothed with a cloud. A *cloud* was, in the Mosaic dispensation, the visible sign of the presence of God, as on Mount Sinai. John, therefore, by this symbol, was given to understand that the messenger he saw was surrounded by the divine influence, as was Moses on the Mount. There was a rainbow upon or over his head. That was the visible symbol of the cove-

<sup>3</sup>The word *angel* means "messenger."



nant of God with Noah. His face was, as it were, the sun. Christ is the "sun of righteousness," and his glory was reflected in the countenance of the messenger, as was the glory of Jehovah in the face of Moses, when he came from the divine presence. His feet were as "pillars of fire." This is, most probably, an allusion to the temple service. Outside the temple of Solomon there were two pillars, called Boaz and Jachin,<sup>4</sup> from each of which chains, in all probability, extended into the interior of the temple, if that is what Paul alludes to (Heb. 6:19), when he speaks of our hope as an "anchor," or chain, which "entereth into that within the veil." This messenger, therefore, comes with the power and authority of all the dispensations of former ages—that of Noah, the Mosaic, and that of the meridian of time, and, in addition, the last dispensation with its temple service.

Furthermore, this messenger had in his hand a "little book open." Fortunately, the explanation of this prophetic language is given in the Doctrine and Covenants. We read:

"What are we to understand by the little book which was eaten by John, as mentioned in the tenth chapter of Revelation? We are to understand that it was a mission and an ordinance for him to gather the tribes of Israel; behold, this is Elias, who, as it is written, must come and restore all things."—Sec. 77:14.

According to this, the messenger John saw was, or represented, the Elias who was to come and restore

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<sup>4</sup>1 Kings 7:21; 2 Chron. 3:17. *Jachin* means "strength," and *Boaz*, "stability."



all things, and Parley P. Pratt, in his *Key to Theology*, p. 70, tells us that the Prophet Joseph was the Elias, the Restorer, the Presiding Messenger, holding the keys of the dispensation of the fulness of times \* \* \* to prepare the way of the Lord. If, then, the prophet Joseph was the messenger described in the vision of John, and the little book was his "mission and ordinance" to gather the tribes of Israel, which mission was committed to him by Moses in the Kirtland temple (Doc. and Cov. 110-11), the great latter-day work of which the coming forth of the Book of Mormon was the beginning, is foretold in this chapter with all the clearness that prophetic language can convey. There is no clearer prophecy in all the Bible.

In a communication to a Rochester paper, dated Jan. 4, 1833, the Prophet Joseph, speaking of the Book of Mormon, says in part:

"By it we learn that our Western Indians are descendants of that Joseph who was sold into Egypt, and that the land of America is a promised land unto them, and unto it all the tribes of Israel will come, with as many of the Gentiles as shall comply with the requirements of the new covenants. But the tribes of Judah will return to old Jerusalem. The city of Zion, spoken of by David in the 102nd Psalm, will be built upon the land of America, and the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs of everlasting joy upon their heads (Isa. 35:10), and then they will be delivered from the overflowing scourge that shall pass through the land. But Judah shall obtain deliverance at Jerusalem. See Joel 2:32; Isa. 26:20-1; Jer. 31:12; Psalm 1:5; Ezek. 34:11-13."—*Hist. of the Church*, Vol. 1, p. 315.

From which it is clear that the Book of Mormon



is very much a book of gathering of the children of Israel.

The messenger with the little book "set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth." Remember that in the days of John the geography of the world was not what it is today. At that time it was thought that all beyond the western coast of the Old World was water. That the messenger was standing upon the sea and the earth means, in modern language, that he was standing on both hemispheres, the eastern and the western; that is, in other words, he was delivering a message in which all the world was concerned. That his right foot was on the sea and his left on the earth may indicate that he came from the western hemisphere, or that his message was first heard there.

John heard the message this angel had to deliver. It was that there should be no more "time" now; that is, no more delay, but that, as soon as the seventh angel begins to sound, "the mystery of God shall be finished, as he hath declared to his servants, the prophets" (vv. 5-7.) That is, his message was that the time has now come for the completion of the plan of salvation—God's mystery (1 Cor. 2:7; 15:51; Eph. 5:32; Col. 1:26; 1 Tim. 3:16)—by the establishment of the kingdom of God, as promised through the holy prophets.

At the time this messenger appeared, seven thunders were heard (v. 14.) John was not permitted to write what they uttered, but that they were messages concerning wars and other calamities is more than likely. These thunders, in all prob-



ability, began rolling with our own Civil War. Such calamities we certainly are led to expect as signs or indications that the second advent is near at hand.

John was told (v. 9) to "eat," that is to say, to read, or, as we should say, to "digest" the contents of, the little book. He did so, and found it sweet in his mouth. But the sweetness was mixed with bitterness (v. 10), which expression may indicate that the seer was given to understand that the acceptance of the Message of the angel would be accompanied by bitter struggles, and even martyrdom, among the faithful Saints.

The chapter closes with the assurance that the coming of that mighty messenger begins a new prophetic era in the history of the world; for that is the evident purport of the words of the angel: "Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings."

Every detail in this prophetic pen-picture is easily recognized in the life-work of the prophet Joseph and the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. It is as plain as if the name itself had been written across the sacred page.

THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL. We now pause a moment at the familiar prediction in Rev. 14:6: "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." This was fulfilled when the angel revealed the Book of Mormon and the Church was restored, with the administration of the ordinances and the proclamation



of the truths of the gospel in its fulness. That there might be no doubt on this point, John tells us what the message of the everlasting gospel is: "Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of water." (v. 7.) In this solemn message the very foundations of "Mormonism" are clearly seen. (1) Fear God! Repent! The hour of judgment has come! (2) Worship him who has made the world! Worship God, as revealed in the story of the creation; God, in whose image man was made, and not statues or pictures, nor the incomprehensible being created by the authors of the Athanasian creed! Worship the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob! This message, which John the Revelator heard sounding in the midst of heaven, as the voice of rolling thunder, is the very message which the Prophet Joseph was commissioned to proclaim to the world.

In view of such prophetic evidence, we may well say, with Orson Pratt: "Never had mankind more prophetic evidence in confirmation of a revelation than they have for the Book of Mormon."