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Relevant Passages from the Book of Mormon

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Chapter 1

Relevant Passages from the Book of Mormon

The destruction that is described in 3rd Nephi is found principally in chapters 8 and 9; however there are other prophetic visions found elsewhere in the Book of Mormon that also describe the destruction. To complete a thorough analysis of the destruction, it will be necessary to address all of the descriptions contained in the text and to provide plausible explanations for all of them. In order to make reading easier, the relevant portions of the Book of Mormon text related to the destruction are cited here.

The text cited here has also been reviewed against the text of the Book of Mormon as represented in *The Book of Mormon: The Earliest Text* by Royal Skousen (2009). For twenty-one years, Skousen has researched the earliest extant sources pertaining to the translation and publication of the Book of Mormon and has published in *The Earliest Text* what he has determined, to the extent possible, to be the original English-language text of the book. Additional words are delineated by brackets, with word and phrase differences delineated by strikeouts, and with the language from the Skousen text enclosed in brackets. No modifications were made to the punctuation or syntax, although it is recognized that the original Book of Mormon as dictated lacked punctuation and verse breaks, so there may be some variability in interpretation based on different punctuation scenarios. This was done because there are some textual differences in a few descriptions of the events. A true review needs to attempt to address any additional items that arise because of any original language perturbations.

Additional recitations of scriptures in this book will similarly include the Skousen text.

Prophecies of the Destruction

Nephi's Vision

1 Nephi 12:1–3

1. And it came to pass that I beheld many generations pass away, after the manner of wars and contentions in the land; and I beheld many cities, yea, even that I did not number them.

2. And it came to pass that I saw a mist of darkness on the face of the land of promise; and I saw lightnings, and I heard thunderings, and earthquakes, and all manner of tumultuous noises; and I saw the earth ~~and the rocks,~~ ~~that they rent~~ [that it rent the rocks]; and I saw mountains tumbling into pieces; and I saw the plains of the earth, that they were broken up; and I saw many cities that they were sunk; and I saw many that they were ~~burned~~ [burnt] with fire; and I saw many that did tumble to the earth, because of the quaking thereof.

3. And it came to pass [that] after I saw these things, I saw the vapor of darkness, that it passed from off the face of the earth; and behold, I saw [the] multitudes who had not fallen because of the great and terrible judgments of the Lord.

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Zenos's Prophecy Recited by Nephi

1 Nephi 19:10–12

10. And the God of our fathers, ~~who~~ [which] were led out of Egypt, out of bondage, and also were preserved in the wilderness by him, yea, the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, yieldeth himself, according to the words of the angel, as a man, into the hands of wicked men, to be lifted up, according to the words of ~~Zenock~~ [Zenoch], and to be crucified, according to the words of Neum, and to be buried in a sepulchre, according to the words of Zenos, which he spake concerning the three days of darkness, which should be a sign given of his death unto ~~those~~ [them] who should inhabit the isles of the sea, more especially given unto ~~those~~ [them] who are of the house of Israel.

11. For thus spake the prophet: The Lord God surely shall visit all the house of Israel at that day, some with his voice, because of their righteousness, unto their great joy and salvation, and others with the thunderings and the lightnings of his power, by tempest, by fire, and by smoke, and vapor of darkness, and by the opening of the earth, and by mountains which shall be carried up.

12. And all these things must surely come, saith the prophet Zenos. And the rocks of the earth must rend; and because of the groanings of the earth, many of the kings of the isles of the sea shall be wrought upon by the Spirit of God, to exclaim: The God of nature suffers.

Samuel the Lamanite's Prophecy

Helaman 14:20–29

20. But behold, as I said unto you concerning another sign, a sign of his death, behold, in that day that he shall suffer death the sun shall be darkened and refuse to give his light unto you; and also the moon and the stars; and there shall be no light upon the face of this land, even from the time that he shall suffer death, for the space of three days, to the time that he shall rise again from the dead.

21. Yea, at the time that he shall yield up the ghost there shall be thunderings and lightnings for the space of many hours, and the earth shall shake and tremble; and the rocks which ~~are~~ [is] upon the face of ~~this~~ [the] earth, which ~~are~~ [is] both above the earth and beneath, which ye know at this time ~~are~~ [is] solid, or the more part of it is one solid mass, shall be broken up;

22. Yea, they shall be rent in twain, and shall ever after be found in seams and in cracks, and in broken fragments upon the face of the whole earth, yea, both above the earth and beneath.

23. And behold, there shall be great tempests, and there shall be many mountains laid low, like unto a valley, and there shall be many places which are now called valleys which shall become mountains, whose height [thereof] is great.

24. And many highways shall be broken up, and many cities shall become desolate.

25. And many graves shall be opened, and shall yield up many of their dead; and many saints shall appear unto many.

26. And behold, thus hath the angel spoken unto me; for he said unto me that there should be thunderings and lightnings for the space of many hours.

27. And he said unto me that while the thunder and the lightning lasted, and the tempest, that these things should be, and that darkness should cover the face of the whole earth for the space of three days.

28. And the angel said unto me that many shall see greater things than these, to the intent that they might believe that these signs and these wonders should come to pass upon all the face of this land, to the intent that there should be no cause for unbelief among the children of men—

29. And this to the intent that whosoever will believe might be saved, and that whosoever will not believe, a righteous judgment might come upon them; and also if they are condemned they bring upon themselves their own condemnation.

Descriptions at the Time of or Immediately after the Destruction

From the Record Kept by Nephi, Disciple of the Risen Christ

3 Nephi 8:1–25

1. And now it came to pass that according to our record, and we know our record to be true, for behold, it was a just man who did keep the record—for he truly did many miracles in the name of Jesus; and there was not any man ~~who~~ [which] could do a miracle in the name of Jesus save he were cleansed every whit from his iniquity—
2. And now it came to pass, if there was no mistake made by this man in the reckoning of our time, the thirty and third year had passed away;
3. And the people began to look with great earnestness for the sign which had been given by the prophet Samuel, the Lamanite, yea, for the time that there should be darkness for the space of three days over the face of the land.
4. And there began to be great doubtings and disputations among the people, notwithstanding so many signs had been given.
5. And it came to pass in the thirty and fourth year, in the first month, ~~on~~ [in] the fourth day of the month, there arose a great storm, such an one as never had been known in all the land.
6. And there was also a great and terrible tempest; and there was terrible thunder, insomuch that it did shake the whole earth as if it was about to divide asunder.
7. And there were ~~exceedingly~~ [exceeding] sharp lightnings, such as never had been known in all the land.
8. And the city of Zarahemla did take fire.
9. And the city of Moroni did sink into the depths of the sea, and the inhabitants thereof were drowned.
10. And the earth was carried up upon the city of Moronihah that in the place of the city ~~there~~ [thereof] became a great mountain.
11. And there was a great and terrible destruction in the land southward.
12. But behold, there was a more great and terrible destruction in the land northward; for behold, the whole face of the land was changed, because of the tempest and the whirlwinds and the thunderings and the lightnings, and the ~~exceedingly~~ [exceeding] great quaking of the whole earth;
13. And the highways were broken up, and the level roads were spoiled, and many smooth places became rough.
14. And many great and notable cities were sunk, and many were burned, and many were ~~shaken~~ [shook] till the buildings thereof had fallen to the earth, and the inhabitants thereof were slain, and the places were left desolate.
15. And there were some cities which remained; but the damage thereof was ~~exceedingly~~ [exceeding] great, and there were many of them who were slain.

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16. And there were some who were carried away in the whirlwind; and whither they went no man knoweth, save they know that they were carried away.

17. And thus the face of the whole earth became deformed, because of the tempests, and the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the quaking of the earth.

18. And behold, the rocks were rent in twain; [yea] they were broken up upon the face of the whole earth, insomuch that they were found in broken fragments, and in seams and in cracks, upon all the face of the land.

19. And it came to pass that when the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the storm, and the tempest, and the quakings of the earth did cease—for behold, they did last for about the space of three hours; and it was said by some that the time was greater; nevertheless, all these great and terrible things were done in about the space of three hours--and then behold, there was darkness upon the face of the land.

20. And it came to pass that there was thick darkness upon ~~all the face of the land~~ [the face of all the land], insomuch that the inhabitants thereof ~~who~~ [which] had not fallen could feel the vapor of darkness;

21. And there could be no light, because of the darkness, neither candles, neither torches; neither could there be fire kindled with their fine and ~~exceedingly~~ [exceeding] dry wood, so that there could not be any light at all;

22. And there was not any light seen, neither fire, nor glimmer, neither the sun, nor the moon, nor the stars, for so great were the mists of darkness which were upon the face of the land.

23. And it came to pass that it did last for the space of three days that there was no light seen; and there was great mourning and howling and weeping among all the people continually; yea, great were the groanings of the people, because of the darkness and the great destruction which had come upon them.

24. And in one place they were heard to cry, saying: O that we had repented before this great and terrible day, and then would our brethren have been spared, and they would not have been burned in that great city Zarahemla.

25. And in another place they were heard to cry and mourn, saying: O that we had repented before this great and terrible day, and had not killed and stoned the prophets, and cast them out; then would our mothers and our fair daughters, and our children have been spared, and not have been buried up in that great city Moronihah. And thus were the howlings of the people great and terrible.

3 Nephi 9:1–12

1. And it came to pass that there was a voice heard among all the inhabitants of the earth, upon all the face of this land, crying:

2. ~~Woe, woe, woe~~ [Woe, woe, woe] unto this people; ~~woe~~ [woe] unto the inhabitants of the whole earth except they shall repent; for the devil laugheth, and his angels rejoice, because of the slain of the fair sons and daughters of my people; and it is because of their iniquity and abominations that they are fallen!

3. Behold, that great city Zarahemla have I burned with fire, and the inhabitants thereof.

4. And behold, that great city Moroni have I caused to be sunk in the depths of the sea, and the inhabitants thereof to be drowned.

5. And behold, that great city Moronihah have I covered with earth, and the inhabitants thereof, to hide their iniquities and their abominations from before my face, that the blood of the prophets and [of] the saints shall not come any more unto me against them.

6. And behold, the city of Gilgal have I caused to be sunk, and the inhabitants thereof to be buried up in the depths of the earth;

7. Yea, and the city of Onihah and the inhabitants thereof, and the city of Mocum and the inhabitants thereof, and the city of Jerusalem and the inhabitants thereof; and waters have I caused to come up in the stead thereof, to hide their wickedness and abominations from before my face, that the blood of the prophets and the saints shall not come up any more unto me against them.
8. And behold, the city of Gadiandi, and the city of Gadiomnah, and the city of Jacob, and the city of Gimgimno, all these have I caused to be sunk, and made hills and valleys in the places thereof; and the inhabitants thereof have I buried up in the depths of the earth, to hide their wickedness and abominations from before my face, that the blood of the prophets and the saints should not come up any more unto me against them.
9. And behold, that great city ~~Jacobugath~~ [Jacob-Ugath], which was inhabited by the people of king Jacob, have I caused to be burned with fire because of their sins and their wickedness, which was above all the wickedness of the whole earth, because of their secret murders and combinations; for it was they that did destroy the peace of my people and the government of the land; therefore I did cause them to be burned, to destroy them from before my face, that the blood of the prophets and the saints should not come up unto me any more against them.
10. And behold, the city of Laman, and the city of Josh, and the city of Gad, and the city of ~~Kishkumen~~ [Kishkumen], have I caused to be burned with fire, and the inhabitants thereof, because of their wickedness in casting out the prophets, and stoning ~~these~~ [them] ~~whom~~ [which] I did send to declare unto them concerning their wickedness and their abominations.
11. And because they did cast them all out, that there were none righteous among them, I did send down fire and destroy them, that their wickedness and abominations might be hid from before my face, that the blood of the prophets and the saints ~~whom~~ [which] I sent among them might not cry unto me from the ground against them.
12. And many great destructions have I caused to come upon this land, and upon this people, because of their wickedness and their abominations.

3 Nephi 10:1–14

1. And now behold, it came to pass that all the people of the land did hear these sayings, and did witness of it. And after these sayings there was silence in the land for the space of many hours;
2. For so great was the astonishment of the people that they did cease lamenting and howling for the loss of their kindred which had been slain; therefore there was silence in all the land for the space of many hours.
3. And it came to pass that there came a voice again unto the people, and all the people did hear, and did witness of it, saying:
4. O ye people of these great cities which have fallen, ~~who~~ [which] are [a] ~~descendants~~ [descendant] of Jacob, yea, ~~who~~ [which] are of the house of Israel, [O ye people of the house of Israel] how oft have I gathered you as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and have nourished you.
5. And again, how oft would I have gathered you as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, yea, O ye people of the house of Israel, ~~who~~ [which] have fallen; yea, O ye people of the house of Israel, ye that dwell at Jerusalem, as ye that have fallen; yea, how oft would I have gathered you as a hen gathereth her chickens, and ye would not.
6. O ye house of Israel whom I have spared, how oft will I gather you as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, if ye will repent and return unto me with full purpose of heart.
7. But if not, O house of Israel, the places of your dwellings shall become desolate until the time of the fulfilling of the covenant to your fathers.

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8. And now it came to pass that after the people had heard these words, behold, they began to weep and howl again because of the loss of their kindred and friends.

9. And it came to pass that thus did the three days pass away. And it was in the morning, and the darkness dispersed from off the face of the land, and the earth did cease to tremble, and the rocks did cease to rend, and the dreadful groanings did cease, and all the tumultuous noises did pass away.

10. And the earth did cleave together again, that it stood; and the mourning, and the weeping, and the wailing of the people ~~who~~ [which] were spared alive did cease; and their mourning was turned into joy, and their lamentations into the praise and thanksgiving unto the Lord Jesus Christ, their Redeemer.

11. And thus far were the scriptures fulfilled which had been spoken by the prophets.

12. And it was the more righteous part of the people who were saved, and it was they who received the prophets and stoned them not; and it was they who had not shed the blood of the saints, ~~who~~ [which] were spared--

13. And they were spared and were not sunk and buried up in the earth; and they were not drowned in the depths of the sea; and they were not burned by fire, neither were they fallen upon and crushed to death; and they were not carried away in the whirlwind; neither were they overpowered by the ~~vapor~~ [vapors] of smoke and of darkness.

14. And now, whoso readeth, let him understand; he that hath the scriptures, let him search them, and see and behold if all these deaths and destructions by fire, and by smoke, and by tempests, and by whirlwinds, and by the opening of the earth to receive them, and all these things ~~are~~ [is] not unto the fulfilling of the prophecies of many of the holy prophets.

3 Nephi 11:1–3

1. And now it came to pass that there were a great multitude gathered together, of the people of Nephi, round about the temple which was in the land Bountiful; and they were marveling and wondering one with another, and were ~~showing~~ [shewing] one to another the great and marvelous change which had taken place.

2. And they were also conversing about this Jesus Christ, of ~~whom~~ [which] the sign had been given concerning his death.

3. And it came to pass that while they were thus conversing one with another, they heard a voice as if it came out of heaven; and they cast their eyes round about, for they understood not the voice which they heard; and it was not a harsh voice, neither was it a loud voice; nevertheless, and notwithstanding it being a small voice it did pierce them that did hear to the center, insomuch that there ~~was~~ [were] no part of their frame that it did not cause to quake; yea, it did pierce them to the very soul, and did cause their hearts to burn.

From the Record Kept by Nephi's Son Who Was Also Named Nephi

4 Nephi 1:6–9

6. And thus did the thirty and eighth year pass away, and also the thirty and ninth, and [the] forty and first, and the forty and second, yea, even until forty and nine years had passed away, and also the fifty and first, and the fifty and second; yea, and even until fifty and nine years had passed away.

7. And the Lord did prosper them exceedingly in the land; yea, insomuch that they did build cities again where

8. Yea, even that great city Zarahemla did they cause to be built again.

9. But there were many cities which had been sunk, and waters came up in the stead thereof; therefore these cities could not be renewed.