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Nine Generations of Spiritual Leaders 5-6

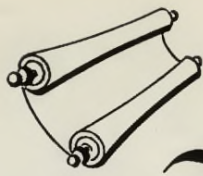
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Abstract: This series identifies a number of well-known Book of Mormon spiritual leaders, many of whom consisted of fathers and their sons (i.e., Alma/Alma the Younger, Mormon/Moroni). The third part covers Nephi the son of Helaman and Nephi the son of Nephi.



Genealogy

NINE GENERATIONS OF SPIRITUAL LEADERS

(Continued)

5. NEPHI, SON OF HELAMAN

NEPHI, eldest son of Helaman, filled . . . the judgment-seat with justice and equity; yea, he did keep the commandments of God, and did walk in the ways of his father. (Helaman 3:37.)

But the faith of Nephi was put to the severest kind of tests. Dissension was followed by bloodshed, and, according to the now familiar pattern, the rebellious were driven to the Lamanites. The Lamanites invaded and captured Zarahemla the following year, and all Nephite possessions in the land southward. Never had such disaster as this befallen the Nephites, who seemed powerless to hurl their enemies back. Then it was that two righteous, humble men did more than all the Nephite armies could do.

Weary because of the iniquity of his people, Nephi resigned the judgment seat, and "took it upon him to preach the word of God all the remainder of his days, and his brother, Lehi, also, all the remainder of his days; for they remembered the words which their father, Helaman, spake unto them." Nor was their message delivered to their own people alone, but they preached with great power among the cities of their enemies, the Lamanites. To the great astonishment of all, eight thousand Lamanites in captured Zarahemla and vicinity were baptized. Directing their steps next to the very heart of the Lamanite domain, they were seized by an army of Lamanites and cast into prison. When their captors came to put them to death, they saw Nephi and Lehi encircled by fire. The earth and the walls of the prison shook, and fear came upon their captors. A voice spoke, calling upon these savage folk to repent and serve the Lord; angels ministered to them; and upwards of three hundred were converted; and by the testimony of these converts a greater part of the Lamanites were convinced. Thus a most remarkable reformation was wrought. They laid down their arms, forsook their hatred for the Nephites and the traditions of their fathers, and even yielded up to the Nephites the cities they had wrested from them in battle. In a short time the situation was so reversed that Lamanites were sending missionaries to the Nephites, being more righteous than they.

By B.C. 29 there was once more peace in all the land.

This, however, did not long endure. Wickedness and the rise of the Gadianton band and the murder of the chief

judge followed in fell sequence. Soon Nephi's prophetic words were rejected by all the people and there ensued a state of awful wickedness. The heart of this devoted servant of God "was swollen with sorrow within his breast."

Few men in the history of this world have so proved their dependability that the Lord could entrust them with power to seal upon earth and it would be sealed in heaven. Nephi was one so entrusted. God gave him mighty power in word and deed. He foretold to an angry multitude the murder of their chief judge by the latter's own brother. He was commissioned to smite the earth with famine and pestilence, that the people might be brought to repentance and not perish in warfare. Thousands did die of the famine, but at last the people were humbled, repented, and swept the band of wicked Gadiantons from among them till they became extinct. In this righteous state they esteemed Nephi a great prophet and man of God; and Lehi, his brother, was not behind him a whit in righteousness.

Once more the downward trend of exceeding great peace was dissension, wickedness, robbery, and war, to darken the last days of this great prophet. Samuel, the Lamanite, came and uttered his memorable prophecy to unheeding ears. In this period of gathering gloom, Satan had once more great hold upon the people.

In the ninety-first year of the judges, six hundred years after Lehi left Jerusalem, Nephi, the son of Helaman,

. . . departed out of the land of Zarahemla, giving charge unto his son Nephi, who was his eldest son, concerning the plates of brass, and all the records which had been kept, and all those things which had been kept sacred from the departure of Lehi out of Jerusalem. Then he departed out of the land, and whither he went, no man knoweth; and his son Nephi did keep the records in his stead. (III Nephi 1:2-3.)

6. NEPHI THE DISCIPLE, SON OF NEPHI

LIKE his illustrious father, this younger Nephi was destined to be the leading spirit of his nation. In the very year of his father's departure he was in peril of his life. Enemies of the believers in the coming of Christ asserted that the time set for the sign to be given that the Savior was born had passed, and these unbelievers even set a day when all Christians should be put to death. Nephi, deeply sorrowful, bowed down in prayer, crying mightily unto the Lord, in behalf of his people, all the day long. Then the voice of the Lord spoke to Nephi, saying:

Lift up your head and be of good cheer;

for behold, the time is at hand, and on this night shall the sign be given, and on the morrow come I into the world. (III Nephi 1:13.)

There was no darkness that night, but it continued light as midday; and a new star appeared. The unbelievers were frustrated and the saints delivered. Most of the people were converted by these evidences and through the subsequent testimony and preaching of Nephi.

Yet the rising generation among both Nephites and Lamanites proved wayward. Gadianton robbers became numerous, and gained the upper hand, overthrowing the government, and wars threatened the utter destruction of the Nephites. Nephi had the sad duty of recording the dreary chronicle of a wicked people, with the all too brief period of repentance following each dire season of punishment. Laws were set at defiance, and prophets who warned the evildoers were put to death. In the midst of all this, Nephi did his full duty as head of the church.

. . . and Nephi did minister with power and with great authority. And it came to pass that they were angry with him, even because he had greater power than they, for it were not possible that they could disbelieve his words, for so great was his faith on the Lord Jesus Christ that angels did minister unto him daily.

And in the name of Jesus did he cast out devils and unclean spirits; and even his brother did he raise from the dead, after he had been stoned and suffered death by the people. (III Nephi 7:17-19.)

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Of Interest to Norwegians

AMONG the helpful books recently acquired by the Genealogical Society is the following: *Vore Navne, en Etymologisk Navnebok, med Fyldige Utredninger*, by Olaf Ray.

This was recommended to the Society by Elder John A. Widtsoe, who has ever been on the alert to detect any books which will prove of service in the genealogical field.

His comment on this volume is as follows:

I looked over the book with care and with interest. While it is based on etymological research, it can be of very great use to those who are making genealogical researches, especially in Norwegian and related languages. It gives the possible variations of certain names, indications also of the sex to which the name is usually applied, which sometimes is very difficult to decide by the researcher who does not know the language intimately. There are many other possibilities in the use of this little book. It is the most complete one I have seen, and no doubt will be of occasional value for reference by our Scandinavian and old English researchers.



Ward Teaching

Aaronic Priesthood

(Concluded from page 285)

evidence of the healing power of faith. It should be given in the form of a testimony.)

7. Proving Our Faith by Our Works—by a teacher7 minutes
(It is not sufficient that we merely believe or profess faith. Only that faith which we demonstrate in righteous works will call forth the blessings of heaven. Study the following references: Matt. 7:21; James 1:22-26; James 2:14-19.)
8. Special musical number by Aaronic Priesthood members
9. The Faith of the Prophet Joseph Smith—by a priest10 minutes
(Begin with an account of his first vision which came about through his faith in the work of the Lord (see James 1:5). Emphasize the fact that the Aaronic Priesthood was restored 116 years ago in answer to his prayer of faith for light and knowledge and point out some of the innumerable blessings which are ours because of the Holy Priesthood. Relate as many other faith-promoting experiences from the life of the Prophet as your time will permit.)
10. The Teaching of Faith in the Latter-day Saint Home—by a member of the bishopric or a quorum adviser10 minutes
11. Closing song
12. Benediction

Genealogy

(Concluded from page 284)

At the time of the crucifixion of the Savior, great destruction visited this land, and the wicked were utterly destroyed. Afterwards the Savior appeared, and from among all the survivors he chose twelve apostles. Nephi was honored by being the first apostle chosen. The Lord called him to come forth from the midst of the multitude, "And Nephi arose and went forth, and bowed himself before the Lord, and he did kiss his feet." Among the others chosen were Nephi's brother, Timothy, whom he had raised from the dead, and also Nephi's son, Jonas.

From among this twelve, three requested permission of the Lord to remain on the earth to minister to the inhabitants and to bring souls unto Christ, never to endure the pains of death; but to be changed in the twinkling of an eye from mortality to immortality when the Savior shall come in glory to rule and reign. Mormon knew the names of these three Nephites, but was forbidden of the Lord to record their names. It is possible that one or more of the above named disciples were included among these highly privileged ones. By the year 100 A.D. the rest of the disciples "had all gone to the paradise of God."

(To be continued)

WARD TEACHERS

The teacher's duty is to watch over the church always, and be with and strengthen them;

And see that there is no iniquity in the church, neither hardness with each other, neither lying, backbiting, nor evil speaking;

And see that the church meet together often, and also see that all the members do their duty. (D. & C. 20:53-55.)

Ward Teachers' Message for May, 1945

"TITHING"

How well do you understand the Lord's law of tithing? A few questions and answers may be helpful in bringing to the minds of Latter-day Saints a greater appreciation of this law.

What is the definition of tithing? Moses received the commandment from the Lord that "... the tenth shall be holy unto the Lord." (Leviticus 27:32.) The Prophet Alma informs us that "... our father Abraham paid tithes of one-tenth part of all he possessed." (Alma 13:15.) The Lord commanded the Saints through the Prophet Joseph Smith, that they "... shall pay one-tenth of all their interest annually." (Doc. & Cov. Section 119.)

There are two important points placed beyond controversy in the above quotations, (1) that the law of tithing is divine, (2) that tithing means the paying of one-tenth. A person cannot fully justify his claim to a belief in the word of the Lord if he denies the validity of the law of tithing. Any Latter-day Saint who does not believe in paying a full tithing should register his complaint with the Lord, for he alone is the giver of the law.

Who should pay tithing? "Members of the Church who have any income or increase from property, or who receive wages, salaries, or gifts, should pay one-tenth of their 'increase' annually. Children eight years of age and over who have been baptized are amenable to the law of tithing and should be encouraged to tithe their earnings, no matter how small the amount."

Who are exempt from payment of tithing? "Aged persons without incomes; women who have no incomes separate from those of their husbands; children who have no individual source of revenue; and persons entirely dependent on relief, are exempt from the payment of tithing."

When should tithes be paid? "The proper time to pay tithing is when one's income is received. Farm products, or preferably their equivalent in cash, should be paid in the season in which they are gathered, or at the time of their disposal. Wage earners should pay their tithing weekly, monthly, or at such other times as they receive their compensation. The practice of delaying the payment of tithing until the end of the year is largely responsible for the failure of many people to observe this law of promise fully."

What should be the attitude of the tithepayer? Tithing should be paid out of a sincere desire to be obedient to the will of our Heavenly Father. If tithing is paid grudgingly or out of selfish motives, it is doubtful whether the tithepayer is entitled to the blessings promised those who obey this law in the proper spirit.

What blessings follow the payment of tithing? We need to pay our tithing infinitely more than the Lord needs the tithing we pay. A selfish person could not reasonably hope to share the blessings of a kingdom built upon the principle of unselfishness. When we pay our full and honest tithing, we overcome selfishness, covetousness, greed,—we are obedient which, in itself, is a refining influence.

The Lord has promised that if we pay our tithing, he will open the "windows of heaven, and pour out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it" (Malachi 3:8-10), and he always keeps his promises.