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Lesson 63 - The Death of Lehi

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LESSON 63.—THE DEATH OF LEHI.

PLACE.—Land of First Inheritance—Modern Chili. TEXT.—II Nephi 4:12.

And it came to pass after my father Lehi, had spoken unto all his household, according to the feelings of his heart, and the spirit of the Lord which was in him, he waxed old. And it came to pass that he died, and was buried.

[It is intended that this lesson should be used as a review of the life of the Prophet Lehi.]

LESSON STATEMENT.

The people of Lehi were so few in number that they were a quiet and solemn race, with few amusements, but with an oppressing sense of the vastness of the land which they occupied, and of their own insignificance. Nor was there entire peace amongst them, for Laman and Lemuel, with others, were still fractious and turbulent.

In course of time Lehi felt that his earthly life was near its close, for he was aged and in failing health. So he called to him his sons and daughters and the other members of his colony, and blessed them in the same manner as his forefather Jacob blessed his family before he died. Lehi also prophesied many things that should happen to his posterity after him, for he was possessed of much of the Spirit of the Lord. After he had done this he died and was buried.

NOTE.

LEHI.—A Hebrew prophet, of the tribe of Manasseh, whom the Lord called to warn the Jews of their coming captivity in Babylon. Lehi was a man of considerable means, and of good repute among the Jews. He had dwelt in Jerusalem all his life.

¹In the first year of the reign of Zedekiah, king of Judah (B. C. 600), the Lord gave Lehi a number of prophetic dreams and visions, and, in compliance with the admonitions of those manifestations, he went forth

among the Jews proclaiming the sorrows that would inevitably be theirs if they did not repent and return to the Lord. But the Jews treated Lehi just as they were treating all the rest of the prophets who came to them. They paid no heed to the message he bore. But he did not cease to labor in their midst until their anger grew so intense that they sought his life; and they would have slain him if the Lord had not protected him.²

When it became impossible for him to remain longer and minister unto the Jews he was instructed to gather up such things as he could carry and take them into the wilderness with his family, where the Lord would teach him what more He required at his hands.

Lehi's family consisted of his wife Sariah, and his four sons, Laman, Lemuel, Sam and Nephi. Lehi had also daughters, but whether they were born at this time is not evident from the record. We have no account of the precise road which Lehi and his family took when they left Jerusalem. Undoubtedly they traveled through the wilderness of Judea southward till they reached the eastern arm of the Red Sea. They journeyed along the Arabian shore of that sea for some little distance, till they came to a valley through which a small stream flowed. Here they rested. While tarrying in this valley, Lehi, by Divine direction, twice sent his sons to Jerusalem: the first time to obtain certain most precious records, the second, to bring a family to join them in their journey. The head of this family was named Ishmael. In both undertakings the young men were successful, and the company was strengthened by the addition of Zoram; and Ishmael and his family.³ Soon after, five marriages took place: Zoram married Ishmael's eldest daughter, and the four sons of Lehi espoused four younger ones.

While Lehi and his party dwelt in the valley of Lemuel, he received many glorious manifestations from the Lord. Like Enoch, John the Revelator and others, the world's future history was mapped out before him, and he not only saw things that related to his own posterity, but the scene widened until he appears to have been shown all that would happen to the sons and daughters of mankind to the very last generation.

Before long, Lehi was directed to resume his journey; and a wonderful instrument, prepared by Divine condescension, called a Liahona, or compass,⁴ was given him to guide the wandering feet of the company in their travels.

To their next tarrying place, which they reached in four days, they gave the name of Shazer. After a short rest, during which time they killed game for food, they again took up their line of march, keeping in the most

fertile parts of the wilderness, which were near the borders of the Red Sea. Thus they continued journeying for some time, when, by direction of the Liahona, they changed the course of their travels, and moved almost directly east across the Arabian peninsula, until they reached the waters on its eastern coast. There they found a very fruitful land, which they called Bountiful.⁵ The journey thus far occupied eight years from the time they left Jerusalem.

When the people of Lehi reached the sea shore they rejoiced greatly that their tedious wanderings were over. Nephi, by Divine direction, built a ship to carry them across these great waters.⁶ When the vessel was finished, the voice of the Lord came to Lehi, commanding that he and his people should arise and go aboard the ship.

During Lehi's travels in the wilderness two sons were born to him, whom he named Jacob and Joseph, respectively. The patriarch and his wife were now advancing in years, and their peace was much disturbed on the ocean by the cruel conduct of Laman and others towards Nephi. In fact the miseries induced by this conduct nearly resulted in the death of the aged couple.⁷

After many days, the vessel with its precious freight reached the shores of this continent. Then with hearts full of rejoicing, they left the vessel and went forth upon the land which God had given to them and to their generations after them.⁸

Some time, we know not how long, after Lehi's arrival, believing that his end was approaching, he gathered his children together, as did his forefathers before him, and being inspired by the spirit of prophecy, he blessed them, foretelling many things that should occur to them to their latest generations.

Soon after Lehi had uttered these blessings, the Lord took him from this earth to dwell with Him in eternity. Of the death of Sariah, his wife, we have no account.

1. See lesson 43.
2. See lesson 44.
3. See lesson 46.
4. See lesson 47.
5. See lesson 58.
6. See lesson 59, 60.
7. See lesson 61.
8. See lesson 62.

WHAT WE MAY LEARN FROM THIS LESSON.

1. That Lehi, before his death, gathered his posterity about him and blessed them.
2. That in doing this he was guided by the feelings of his heart, and by the Spirit of the Lord, which was in him.
3. That this Spirit was to him a spirit of revelation and prophecy.
4. By it he foretold many things that would happen to his posterity in future generations.
5. That after this he waxed old, died, and was buried.

QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON.

1. In what Land did Lehi, in his old age, dwell?
2. When he found age creeping on, whom did he gather around him?
3. What did he tell them?
4. By what Spirit was he inspired?
5. What other Patriarchs have acted in this same way?
6. What can you tell regarding Lehi's death and burial?

[As many review questions from the life of Lehi (see Note) may be asked as the teacher deems desirable for the progress of the class.]