



Type: Book Chapter

Book of Mormon - A Prophecy

Author(s): Nephi Lowell Morris

Source: *Prophecies of Joseph Smith and their Fulfillment*

Published: Salt Lake City; Deseret Book Company, 1920

Pages: 125-140

Abstract: The Book of Mormon is a volume of prophecy and also a fulfillment of other prophecies. Morris cites many passages that prophesy of the greatness of America and the liberty to be enjoyed on the American continent. These passages have been fulfilled particularly noting the Monroe Doctrine and the ill success of Emperor Maximilian over Mexico and Dom Pedro of Brazil.

Book of Mormon—A Prophecy

The Book of Mormon is a prophecy of a new gospel dispensation which was opened at the time of its coming forth.

The Book of Mormon is a volume of prophecy and is also the fulfillment of innumerable prophecies. It was translated by Joseph Smith by “the gift and power of God,” and was published to the world in 1829—a decade less than a century ago. It purports to be a religious and political history of distinct and separate peoples who occupied this land at, for the most part, widely remote periods. Both peoples were divinely led to this land from the eastern hemisphere.

They, through their prophets, were in more or less constant communication with the Deity. From him they received a very clear and exalted conception of the mission and destiny of this land of America. To them it was a “choice land,” to be held in reserve until modern times when its great role among the nations of the earth would be played. Some one has said in recent times, “One of God’s greatest experiments, the development of North America.”

These declarations concerning the “land of liberty”—America—are largely responsible for the lofty patriotism of the Latter-day Saints. No people of religious development could have a higher and more exalted conception of the destiny and mission of their country than do the Latter-day Saints. It is as deeply written in their souls as

it is in the base and fabric of their sacred literature. God hath spoken it, who can deny it?

So was it with the ancient inhabitants of the land. Here are a few sentiments held by them concerning this land:

“The land of promise, which was choice above all other lands, which the Lord God had preserved for a righteous people; . . .

“And now we can behold the decrees of God concerning this land, that it is a land of promise, and whatsoever nation shall possess it, shall serve God, or they shall be swept off when the fulness of his wrath shall come upon them. And the fulness of his wrath cometh upon them when they are ripened in iniquity.” . . .

1. *“A choice land.”*

“The discovery of the New World by Columbus was the most dramatic incident in the secular history of mankind. It may be in the moral vicissitudes of the race something of heroism, of sacrifice more grand and ennobling has occurred; but among the distinctly human events nothing so wonderful and inspiring has ever been witnessed as the uplift of the darkness and the revelation of the dawn on that October morning when ‘Land Ho!’ was the cry from the prow of the Pinta.”—From Ellis’ History of Our Country.

Draper says:

“The discovery of America agitated Europe to its deepest foundations. All classes of men were affected. The populace at once went wild with the lust of gold and a love of adventure. Well might

Pomponius Laetus shed tears of joy when tidings of the great event reached him. Well might Leo X., a few years later, sit up till far in the night reading to his sister and his cardinals the 'Oceania' of Anghiera."

And these early enthusiasts on the greatness of America had only a most meagre suggestion of her real greatness. She has in little more than a century developed the greater portion of the world's wealth. She has within the last five years, literally saved a war-mad world from starvation, as well as from a merciless and tyrannical despotism. She is creditor to Europe in many billions, and Europe, and humanity as a whole, are debtors to America for something that cannot be measured in treasure—the introduction of a genuine democracy in the earth, and finally, its complete preservation, if not its perpetuation for all time to come.

Speaking of America's resources, an authority of finance made this remarkable disclosure concerning what our country was able to do during the recent war:

"In the few months that we were engaged in war, the expenditures made, the obligations authorized by the Government exceed all the expenditures of our Government for all purposes during the prior one hundred and forty years, including the cost of all the wars we have fought; of all the pensions we have paid; of all the buildings and public works the Government has constructed; of all the navies we had built and all the canals we had dug; yet after all this tremendous outlay our resources were not seriously strained. Had it been necessary to win the war, all that expenditure of treasure would have been repeated over and over again and again; and the loyal-

ty and patriotism of our people would have supported the program and our resources would have withstood the strain.”

And of her political mission was it not written in the ages past: “And he will lift up an ensign to the nations from afar?”

Has she not been the political hope of humanity from the day of her founding?

Of the importance of her place in the world let the great Webster speak:

“If in our case, the representative system ultimately fails, popular governments must be pronounced impossible. No combination of circumstances more favorable to the experiment can ever be expected to occur. The last hopes of mankind, therefore rest with us; and if it should be proclaimed that our example had become an argument against the experiment, the knell of popular liberty would be sounded throughout the earth.”

In the light of the important part which America has played in the world’s great war she was obviously proven to be “a choice land, which the Lord God had reserved for a righteous people,” as well as for a sacred and worthy purpose. It is as plain to the world today as it was to those ancient American prophets that God had a mission and a destiny for America.

2. *“And he that fighteth against Zion shall perish, saith God.”*

DISCOVERY AND CONQUEST BY SPAIN.

Immediately upon the discovery of America, the King and Queen of Spain sent a representative to the court of

Pope Alexander VI for the purpose of securing in themselves a good and sufficient title to the territory thus found. Precedent had already paved the way, and with the conviction evidently in mind that "pagans and infidels have no lawful property in their lands and goods, but that the children of God may rightfully take them away," the bull was issued. Acting on the further assumption that "all countries under the sun are subject of right to papal disposal," the transfer was made to Spain "in the fulness of apostolic power, of all lands west and south of a line drawn from the arctic to the Antarctic pole one hundred leagues west of the Azores." (This must have been one of the largest real estate transfers of the season; at least it was the most important one.)

It directed that unbelieving nations be subdued, "and that no pains be spared in reducing the Indians to Christianity."

Subsequent events prove with what nicety of expression that word "reduce" was used. The Indians were even denied common Adamic descent. (Cortez and Pizarro literally wrote their names across the vales and mountains of Mexico and Peru in living streams of blood.)

Under such headings as the ones that follow, Draper describes the deeds of Spain in a land "consecrated to human liberty:"

"The American Tragedy," and "The Crime of Spain."

"The lust for gold was only too ready to find its justification in the obvious conclusion [viz.: that the Indians were not members of the human family]; and the Spaniards, with appalling atrocity, proceeded to act towards these unfortunates as though they did not belong to the human race. Already their lands

and goods had been taken from them by apostolic authority. Their persons were next seized, under the text that the heathen are given as an inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth as a possession. It was one unspeakable outrage, one unutterable ruin, without discrimination of age or sex. Those who died not under the lash in a tropical sun died in the darkness of the mine. From sequestered sand-banks, where the red flamingo fishes in the gray of the morning; from fever-stricken mangrove thickets, and the gloom of impenetrable forests; from hiding places in the clefts of the rocks and the solitude of invisible caves; from the eternal snows of the Andes, where there was no witness but the all-seeing sun, there went up to God a cry of human despair. By millions upon millions, whole races and nations were remorselessly cut off. The Bishop of Chiapa affirms that more than fifteen millions were exterminated by his time! From Mexico and Peru a civilization that might have instructed Europe was crushed out."

Here Draper asks: "Is it for nothing that Spain has been made a hideous skeleton among living nations?" He answers: "Had not her punishment overtaken her, men would have surely said, 'There is no retribution, there is no God?'" He continues in the fearful indictment: "It has been her evil destiny to ruin two civilizations. Oriental and Occidental, and to be ruined thereby herself. With circumstances of dreadful barbarity she expelled the Moors, who had become children of her soil by as long a residence as the Normans have had in England from William the Conqueror to our time. In America she destroyed races more civilized than herself. Expulsion and emigration have deprived her of

her best blood, her great cities have sunk into insignificance, and towns that once had more than a million of inhabitants can now show only a few scanty thousands."

With such a history as this in a land which had been dedicated to the cause of Freedom, little wonder that the perpetrator of such crimes should meet a speedy and withering judgment at the hands of the God who had uttered these unalterable decrees.

And, as if to affirm and verify these decrees, this nation some score of years ago, in the name of humanity arose in righteous indignation and freed the hemisphere of this ancient unconscionable despot. She was forced to surrender her last Occidental possession when Cuba was let free from her cruel grasp. And thus the greatest prize, the richest possession ever held by earthly monarch was lost to her forever.

God had declared centuries ago that he would "fortify this land against all other nations," and it was further decreed that "he that fighteth against Zion shall perish, saith God." Thus the fatal verdict fell upon Spain.

3. *"And I will fortify this land against all other nations."*

The great powers of the earth were contending for supremacy in the land. Spain was early on the recession as the foresight of France turned her penetrating eye toward America. England's superior statesmanship was steadily supplanting France. Then the newly born nation arose in resistance to the foreign encroachments.

"The armies rose from out the earth,
And great ships loomed upon the sea,
And Liberty had second birth
In blood and fire and victory!"

Three great empires were exercising temporary dominion over the land. Three sovereign powers with England rapidly rising to supreme control. But the God of this land had outlined an altogether different program. Behold the miracle of the God of nations turing their greedy conflicts into a glorious consummation of his own well-defined plans and purposes! Let the old historian, Marcus Wilson, relate the wonderful story as he interpreted the unfolding plans of the Almighty:

“Thus closed the most important war in which England had ever been engaged,—a war which arose wholly out of her ungenerous treatment of her American colonies. The expense of blood and treasure which this war caused England was enormous; nor, indeed, did her European antagonists suffer much less severely. The United States was the only country that could look to any beneficial results from the war, and these were obtained by a strange union of opposing motives and principles *unequaled in the annals of history*. France and Spain, the arbitrary despots of the old world had stood forth as the protectors of an infant republic, and had combined, contrary to all the principles of their political faith, to establish the rising liberties of America. *They seemed but as blind instruments in the hands of providence, employed to aid in the founding of a nation which should cultivate those republican virtues that were destined yet to regenerate the world upon the principles of universal intelligence, and eventually to overcome the time-worn system of tyrannical usurpation of the few over the many.*”

4. “Behold, this is a choice land, and whatsoever nation shall possess it, shall be free from bondage,

and from captivity, and from all other nations under heaven, if they will but serve the God of the land, who is Jesus Christ."

The heritage of a righteous occupancy of the land of America is perfect freedom.

The discoverers of America came as conquerors and not as colonizers or home seekers. Lust for gold, and love of conquest never built homes, but have destroyed them by thousands. The Pilgrim Fathers, the Huguenots and the Puritans were essentially home makers. They came to this land to live, not to plunder and destroy. Thus America received from the Old World the virile, the serious, the home-loving, the heroic and the brave, whom Webster befittingly styled "the best blood of Europe." The home is the greatest paladium of freedom. It is the greatest resistent to encroachment. It is the greatest inspiration to defensive combat. It is the greatest justification and the surest foundation for independence. This is a land that can supply, more perfectly than any other, the infinite variety of man's wants, hence, the natural elements of home making are here. With these abounding, independence becomes natural and also inevitable.

Thus while Spain, France, and England were engaging in contests of diplomacy and strategy, often resorting to arms, the real seeds of patriotism were making sturdy growth in the thrifty colonies which were spreading throughout New England. When once men become tillers of the soil, which they call their own, a wholesome and abiding patriotism becomes firmly rooted in it. So, when a king of wretched mental endowments, pursuing a narrow-minded policy, persists in levying oppressive taxes upon the home of patriots, resentment is inevit-

able. Thus England, unfortunate in having a reactionary monarch on her throne, alienated the loyal colonist of America and lost the greatest possession over which she ever exercised sovereign authority.

It was inevitably so, however. The patriots at first flouted the idea of separation. They patiently and humbly plead for redress and adjustment of grievances. But King George III. persisted in provoking them to resentment. Let these noble declarations of causes and necessity of taking up arms, as framed in Philadelphia in 1775, speak for their aspirations:

“Our cause is just. Our union is perfect. Our internal resources are great, and, if necessary, foreign assistance is undoubtedly obtainable. We gratefully acknowledge, as signal instances of the Divine favor toward us, that his providence would not permit us to be called into this severe controversy, until we were grown up to our present strength, had been previously exercised in war-like operations, and possessed of the means of defending ourselves. With hearts fortified with these animating reflections, we most solemnly, before God and the world *declare*, that, exerting the utmost energy of these powers, which our beneficent Creator hath graciously bestowed upon us, the arms we have been compelled by our enemies to assume, we will, in defiance of every hazard, with unabating firmness and perseverance, employ for the preservation of our liberties; being with one mind resolved to die freemen rather than live slaves.

“Lest this declaration should disquiet the minds of our friends and fellow subjects in any part of the empire, we assure them that we mean not to dis-

solve that union which has so long and so happily subsisted between us, and which we sincerely wish to see restored. Necessity has not yet driven us into that desperate measure, or induced us to excite any other nation to war against them. We have not raised armies with ambitious designs of *separating from Great Britain, and establishing independent states*. We fight not for glory or for conquest. We exhibit to mankind the remarkable spectacle of a people attacked by unprovoked enemies, without any imputation or even suspicion of offense. They boast of their privileges and civilization, and yet proffer no milder conditions than servitude or death."

Then came, contrary to their cherished traditions and sincere wishes, the inevitable step by which "whatsoever nation shall possess it [this land], shall be free from bondage, and from captivity, and from all other nations under heaven," in the Declaration of Independence.

"We . . . solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be free and independent states; that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown and that all political connection between them and the State of Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; *and that as free and independent states*, they have full power to levy war, conclude peace, contract alliances, establish commerce, and do all other acts and things which *independent states may of right do*. And for the support of this declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor."

5. *“A land of liberty,” and “no kings upon the land.”*

The Book of Mormon, by the mouth of one of its prophets who lived some six hundred years B. C., made this prophetic declaration concerning the land of America:

“And this land shall be a land of liberty unto the Gentiles, and there shall be no kings upon the land, who shall raise up unto the Gentiles;

“And I will fortify this land against all other nations;

“And he that fighteth against Zion shall perish, saith God;

“For he that raiseth up a king against me, shall perish, for I, the Lord, the king of heaven, will be their king, and I will be a light unto them forever that hear my words.”

This prediction regarding the land of America, and its occupancy by Gentile nations seems to refer entirely to times subsequent to its discovery by Columbus.

In the Book of Mormon this land is called the inheritance of the descendants of Joseph, but it also says that the “Gentiles shall be blessed upon the land.” These are the “times of the Gentiles” and they are today the recipients of Divine favor as never before. During this great and favored period of history this land, which was held in reserve, was to become inhabited. Here Zion was to be built up and to it “all nations” should “flow.” Hence we conclude that from the time of the discovery, “there shall be no kings upon the land, who shall raise up unto the Gentiles.”

It is remarkable that so few attempts have been made

to establish thrones in America. Perhaps the most substantial barrier has been the Monroe Doctrine, although, there has, for the most part, been so little real force behind that "doctrine" that its very weakness has invited more than one European monarch to attempt to "smash it." Be that as it may, it is a very remarkable thing that the Book of Mormon decree against kings should find such extraordinary confirmation as this very historic pronouncement affords.

It defied all the world to attempt to set up any authority of their own, or to interfere with any of the independent governments then existing in North or South America. (According to Joseph Smith the whole of America, both North and South, constitutes the land of Zion.)

In a word the real meaning of the Monroe Doctrine is, "Hands off" and that too, to all the world. Read the Doctrine:

"The American continents, by the free and independent condition which they have assumed and maintain, are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization for European powers. . . . We should consider any attempt on their part to extend their system to *any portion of this hemisphere* as dangerous to our peace and safety. With the existing colonies or dependencies of any European power we have not interfered and shall not interfere. But with the governments who have declared their independence and maintained it, and whose independence we have, on great consideration and just principles, acknowledged, we could not view any interposition for *the purpose of oppressing or controlling, in any other manner, their destiny, by any European power, in any other light*

than as the manifestation of an unfriendly disposition toward the United States."

One could imagine that the Book of Mormon prophet might have been standing at the elbow of President Monroe when he signed the document as it was handed to him by his Secretary of State, John Quincy Adams. For the Monroe Doctrine is nothing more than the Book of Mormon prophecy put in the form of a state paper. It has been tested and tried. It has been called the "most magnificent bluff in history, and so far the most successful." At any rate, it has stood. It has been affirmed and re-affirmed by President after President until it is now upheld and proclaimed as with the voice of a hundred millions of people. So important is it in the estimation of many of the American people, that the proposed League of Nations is not considered satisfactory to this country until the other nations shall not only *recognize* the doctrine, but actually *accept it*, and that, too, as it shall at all times be interpreted and applied by the United States. Could a great nation pursue a definite course of action with respect to a fixed policy, with more steadfast purpose than our nation has in maintaining this Doctrine? For well nigh one hundred years we have walked, without deviation, in the path pointed out for us more than two thousand years ago by the prophets of ancient America.

"THE EMPIRE OF MEXICO."

While the United States was in the midst of the great struggle of the Civil War, Napoleon III. thought the opportune time had arrived for him to test the integrity of the Monroe Doctrine. France had long appreciated the strength that colonial possessions in America would

bring to her. She wished to extend her trade in that direction. A handsome kingdom on the other side of the Atlantic appealed to "Napoleon the Little" as an alluring enterprise. Especially, if it proved to be a kingdom of stability, where a comfortable throne would be made secure. So, he decided to try it out on somebody else until it should get beyond the experimental stage. Maximilian of Austria, brother of the late Francis Joseph, Emperor of Austria, was the victim. Archduke Maximilian was escorted by fifty thousand Frenchmen who were expected to see that he did not fall from his "throne of Mexico." With this French army, the emperor was soon in control of strife-torn Mexico. He was coronated on April 10, 1864. The United States, having on its hands quite a little domestic problem, could not attend the coronation ceremonies, as she would have liked. She thought the affair should have been delayed until such time as she could attend. It really was discourteous to treat a close neighbor so. The United States refused to recognize the empire. And when our own domestic problem was finally settled, we notified Napoleon that his make-shift "Emperor of Mexico" was altogether out of style in America and that he had better take him back to Europe. Secretary Seward had also notified him that we could not allow the Monroe Doctrine to be so infringed. Napoleon had observed what had occurred at Vicksburg and Gettysburg and began to lose faith in the success of his would-be ally, the Southern Confederacy. In 1866 he withdrew his fifty thousand troops from Mexico. He was about to take Maximilian back, when, contrary to all the rules of etiquette, the Mexican revolutionists took him and some of his generals out to Queretaro, where they were court-martialed and shot to death. This is the short-lived "Em-

pire of Mexico" proved an evanescent dream, coming to a quick and tragic end.

"There shall be no kings raised up unto the Gentiles upon this land."

UNHAPPY DOM PEDRO OF BRAZIL.

It is true that an Imperial throne was established in Brazil in the early part of the last century. It passed through many vicissitudes and revolutions. Emperors were deposed; regencies reigned for juvenile kings; and, finally, the emperor was ordered to "leave the country with his family within twenty-four hours." In the dark of the night the imperial family was taken on board a cruiser. When the ship left the harbor it carried with it, not only the royal family, but as if to rid America of every vestige of imperialism it took with it the catafalque, i. e. the imperial stage with all its pompous drapings, throne and all.

And that is the last word of royal occupancy in modern times of any fragment of both North and South America.

"This shall be a land of liberty unto the Gentiles, and there shall be no kings upon the land."