



Type: Book Chapter

Chapter XVII

Author(s): George Reynolds

Source: *The Story of the Book of Mormon*

Published: Salt Lake City; Joseph Hyrum Parry, 1888

Pages: 119-120

Abstract: The Growth of the People in Zarahemla—They Build Many Cities—Mosiah's Sons Desire to Take a Mission to the Lamanites—Mosiah Inquires of the Lord—The Divine Answer

CHAPTER XVII.

THE GROWTH OF THE PEOPLE IN ZARAHENLA—THEY BUILD MANY CITIES—MOSIAH'S SONS DESIRE TO TAKE A MISSION TO THE LAMANITES—MOSIAH INQUIRES OF THE LORD—THE DIVINE ANSWER.

THE INHABITANTS of Zarahemla at this time were all considered Nephites, though the descendants of Mulek and his companions were the most numerous. But the Nephites, though the last comers to Zarahemla, were the governing race, and the kingdom had been conferred upon none but those who were the descendants of Nephi. The Nephites ruled by the right of their higher civilization, the possession of the records and the authority of the holy priesthood. There is another strange fact with regard to the inhabitants of South America at this time, it is that the Lamanites were twice as numerous as the combined people of Nephi and Zarahemla. This may have been owing to the fact that when any defection occurred among the Nephites, the dissatisfied portions of the community generally went over to the Lamanites and became absorbed in that race.

In these days there was much peace in the land of Zarahemla. The Lord blessed the people and they became very numerous, contented and wealthy. When Benjamin was king his people appear to have all resided in and immediately around the city of Zarahemla, as the king directed his son to gather them at the temple on the morrow, and on the morrow they were all there, which would have been impossible had they lived at any great distance from headquarters.

We judge that at that time the majority inhabited the city and farmed the land around. Up to this time no other city than Zarahemla is mentioned in that land, but now the people began to spread abroad, building, as the historian states, large cities and villages in all quarters of the land. We may reasonably suppose that at this epoch were founded the cities of Aaron, Ammonihah, Gideon, Manti, Melek and others mentioned in the annals of the succeeding twenty years.

Notwithstanding the great good they had done, the sons of king Mosiah were not content to confine their labors to the land of Zarahemla. They longed to carry the glad tidings of salvation to the benighted Lamanites. Ignoring the dangers and despising the pains of such a mission, they plead with their father many days for his consent for them to go to the land of Nephi. The bloodthirsty, revengeful character of the Lamanites was too well known to the king for him to think of his sons going into their midst without causing him feelings of dread and apprehension, but he had no desire to quench their holy zeal towards God and their love towards their unfortunate fellows, lest he should sin by so doing, and rob thousands of the opportunity of hearing the everlasting truths through obedience to which mankind is saved. He therefore inquired of the Lord. The answer came, Let them go up, for many shall believe on their words, and they shall have eternal life, and I will deliver thy sons out of the hands of the Lamanites. With this divine assurance Mosiah consented, and shortly after, with some other missionaries, whom they had chosen, these four valiant God-fearing youths started on their perilous mission.