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Chapter XXXVI

Author(s): George Reynolds

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Abstract: Pacumeni Slain—Helaman Chosen Chief Judge—The Conspiracy to Slay Him—Kishkumen Killed—The Prosperity of the Nephites under Helaman

CHAPTER XXXVI.

PACUMENI SLAIN—HELAMAN CHOSEN CHIEF JUDGE—THE CONSPIRACY TO SLAY HIM—KISHKUMEN KILLED—THE PROSPERITY OF THE NEPHITES UNDER HELAMAN.

AS PACUMENI, the chief judge, had been slain at the capture of Zarahemla, no sooner was the war over than an election took place to fill his vacant seat. The choice fell upon Helaman, the more righteous of the people providentially being still in the majority.

Helaman being a God-fearing, just man, his election was very distasteful to the Gadianton band and its sympathizers. They resolved to slay him as they had before slain the younger Pahoran, and place Gadianton on the judgment seat in his stead. To accomplish this the same vile instrument was chosen—Kishkumen. But the protecting hand of the great Jehovah was over and round about Helaman, and he preserved him from the assassin's knife. A servant of Helaman, possibly a detective commissioned in such times of peril to watch the movements of the dangerous classes, by disguise became acquainted with the doings of the robber band, and of their intentions towards his master.

As Kishkumen was on his way to fulfil his bloody work, this servant, whose name is not recorded, met him, and gave him one of their secret signs. This admitted him into the confidence of the assassin, who explained his errand, and asked to be conducted privately into the judgment hall, where Helaman was then sitting in the performance of his duties. This was agreed upon; the two proceeded to where the murderer expected to find his victim. The strategy of the

servant disarmed his suspicions, he was off his guard. At the opportune moment the servant stabbed Kishkumen, and so adroitly did he perform his work, that the robber fell dead without a groan. The servant immediately ran to the judgment hall, and informed Helaman of all that he had heard, seen and done. Without delay, orders were issued for the arrest of the band, but its members, finding that Kishkumen did not return, and fearing he had miscarried in his unholy work, under the guidance of their leader fled precipitately into the wilderness by a secret way, and, in the depths of its luxuriant vegetation, hid in a place where they could not be found. (B. C. 50).

The succeeding years were of peculiar prosperity, though not of great righteousness, amongst the Nephite people. They spread out and colonized in every direction. Many thousands emigrated to the northern continent, among them great numbers of Ammonites, who were originally Lamanites. Numerous new cities were built, and old ones repaired; ship building was largely carried on, and the arts and manufactures encouraged. Temples, tabernacles and sanctuaries were erected in great numbers; in fact, the people spread out and covered both continents north and south, east and west. The sacred historian states that he has not recorded one hundredth part of the doings of the people—their wickedness and righteousness, their wars and contentions, their peace and prosperity; but many records were kept, upon which the history of these things were engraved, and all that is necessary for the world's good will be brought to light in heaven's own time.

The annals of the remainder of Helaman's rule

are very short. In the years B. C. 45 and 44 there were many contentions in the land, but in the latter portion of the succeeding year they measurably ceased, and tens of thousands were baptized unto repentance. So great was the prosperity of the church at this time, that even the priesthood were surprised thereat, and at the multiplicity of blessings that were poured out upon the people. This happy state of affairs continued until the death of Helaman, though somewhat marred by the increasing pride and vanity that long-continued prosperity had begotten in the hearts of many of the Christians.

Helaman himself was a righteous man: He did observe to keep the judgments, and the statutes, and the commandments of God; and he did do that which was right in the sight of God continually, and he did walk after the ways of his father, insomuch that he did prosper in the land. So writes the historian of Helaman; what more can be said of any man?

Helaman had two sons to whom he gave the names of Nephi and Lehi, to remind them, when they heard their own names called, of the faith and goodness of their great ancestors, who, by God's direction, led their fathers to the promised land. When Helaman died he was succeeded by his son Nephi.

