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Chapter XL

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Abstract: Nephi Translated—His Son Nephi—Time of the Savior's Coming—The Conspiracy to Slay the Believers—The Revelation to Nephi—The Promised Signs Appear—Increase of the Gadianton Robbers—War—Lachoneus Gathers all the People to One Land—The End of the Struggle

might believe that these signs and these wonders should come to pass, upon all the face of this land; to the intent that there should be no cause of unbelief among the children of men;

We shall see as we proceed how wonderfully all these sayings of Samuel the Lamanite were fulfilled.

He closed his prophecy with these emphatic words. First regarding the Lamanites:

Therefore, saith the Lord, I will not utterly destroy them; but I will cause that in the day of my wisdom they shall return again unto me, saith the Lord.

And now behold, saith the Lord, concerning the the people of the Nephites, if they will not repent and observe to do my will, I will utterly destroy them, saith the Lord, because of their unbelief, notwithstanding the many mighty works which I have done among them; and as surely as the Lord liveth shall these things be, saith the Lord.

CHAPTER XL.

NEPHI TRANSLATED—HIS SON NEPHI—TIME OF THE SAVIOR'S COMING—THE CONSPIRACY TO SLAY THE BELIEVERS—THE REVELATION TO NEPHI—THE PROMISED SIGNS APPEAR—INCREASE OF THE GADIANTON ROBBERS—WAR—LACHONEUS GATHERS ALL THE PEOPLE TO ONE LAND—THE END OF THE STRUGGLE.

SHORTLY before the birth of Christ, Nephi transferred the plates of brass and other records to his son Nephi, gave him charge concerning them, and departed from the land of Zarahemla. Whither he went, or what became of him, is hidden from the knowl-

edge of mankind. That he did not return to the dwelling-places of humanity is testified to by his son some ten years afterwards.

Six hundred years had now passed since Lehi and his companions left Jerusalem. The time had arrived, of which Samuel the Lamanite and other prophets had borne testimony, when the phenomena should appear to bear witness of the birth of the Son of God. As the day drew near, signs and miracles increased among the people. But the hardened in heart, who were ever on the watch to entrap those who believed in the words of the prophets, began to circulate the idea that the time had passed and the prophecies had failed. Not content with mocking and reviling those who were anxiously looking for the promised two days and a night when there should be no darkness, they went so far as to appoint a day when all who believed in the coming of the Savior should be slain, except the sign be first given.

This gross wickedness caused Nephi great sorrow; his only recourse was to heaven. Before God, in mighty prayer, he bowed in behalf of his imperiled people. All the day long he continued his earnest supplications. At last the word of the Anointed One came unto him, 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, to show unto the world that I will fulfil all that which I have caused to be spoken by the mouth of my holy prophets. As was thus declared, so was it fulfilled, for at the going down of the sun it was as light as day, and so continued until the morning, when the sun again rose in its usual course. A

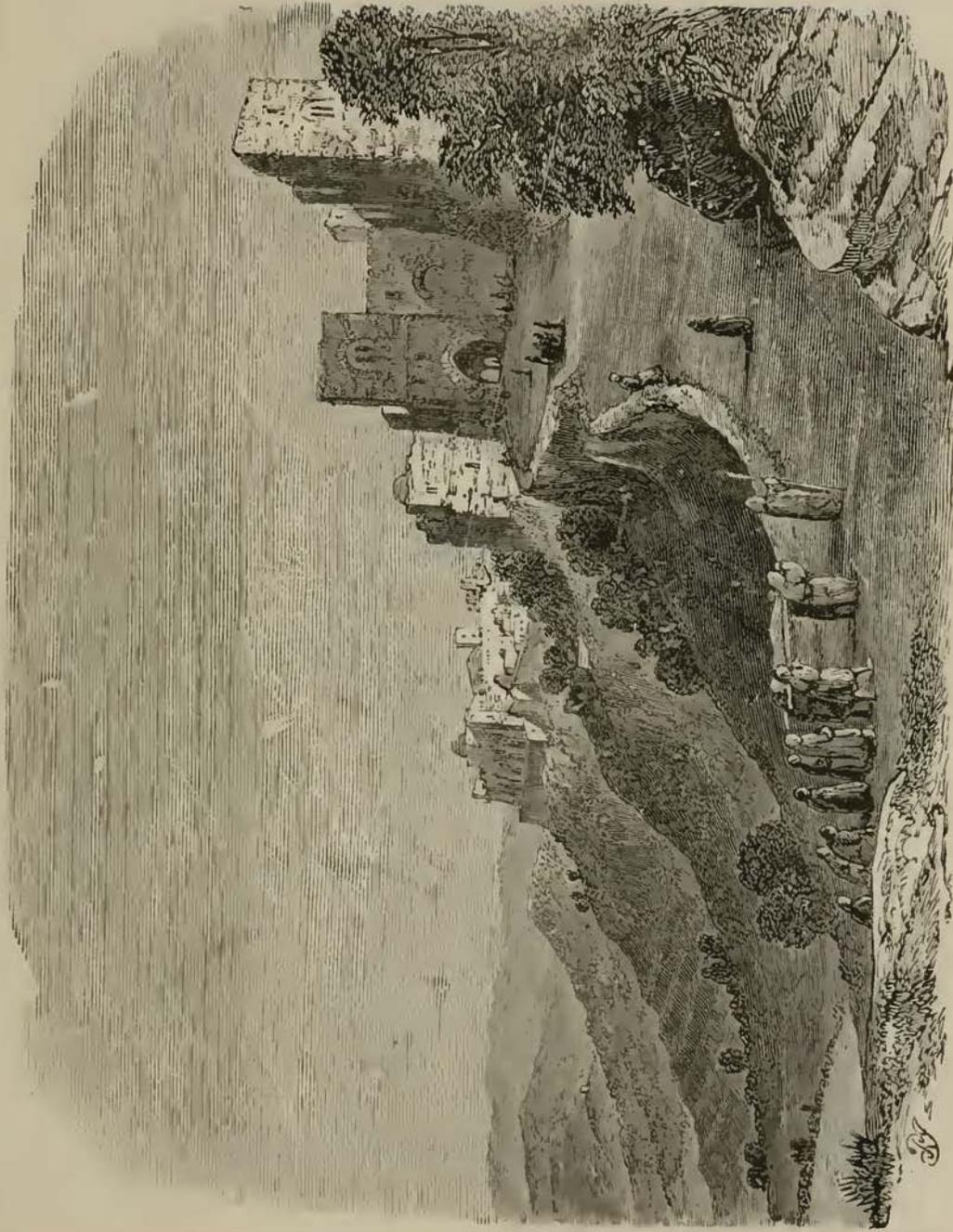
new star had also appeared in the heavens. Then the faithful rejoiced, their hearts were full to overflowing, they knew that their Redeemer was born, and that the great plan of salvation had entered its most glorious phase; God, the great Jehovah, was tabernacled in the flesh. But the wicked quaked with awful dread, they realized the extent of their iniquity, they sensed that they were murderers at heart, for they had plotted to take the lives of the righteous, and in the terror that



THE NEW STAR.

this overwhelming sense of their piteous condition wrought, they sank to the earth as though they were dead.

Many now believed who previously had scorned the divine messages that the prophets bore; but others, inspired of Satan, as soon as they recovered from the fright which the appearance of the promised signs had produced, began to explain them away, and, by various lying rumors, endeavored to nullify the good that had been done in the hearts of many. Others again commenced to teach that it was no longer expedient to



BETHLEHEM OF JUDEA, WHERE JESUS WAS BORN.



observe the laws of Moses, drawing their conclusions from a false interpretation of the scriptures. Notwithstanding these efforts of the evil one, Nephi and others went forth among the people preaching, baptizing many, and bringing a short period of peace to the land.

But those who were righteous were not strong enough to overcome the vast hosts of Gadianton robbers, who, time and time again, swarmed from their mountain retreats, and carried carnage, rapine and desolation to the homes of both Nephites and Lamanites.

Year by year these marauding bands repeated their incursions. Sometimes one party conquered, sometimes the other. This condition of affairs kept the people in such a state of terror and anxiety that life grew a burden to them. Still they repented not in sincerity of heart, and their many afflictions were permitted by the Lord because of their iniquity.

So great was the misery entailed by these invasions, that the chief judge, Lachoneus, at last determined to gather all the people into one place, and by a policy of masterly inactivity wear out or starve out the invaders. We can scarcely understand how terrible must have been the misery endured by the nation at this time, to have caused the conception and execution of such a measure. Can we picture to ourselves the scenes that must have occurred as the people of two continents converged to one gathering place? From the shores of the great lakes in the north, from the stormy Atlantic seaboard, from the coast where the mild Pacific ebbs and flows, from the regions of the southern Andes, the migrating hosts flowed together to Zarahemla and Bountiful, the lands selected as the temporary gather-

ing place. They came with their flocks and herds, their grain and provisions, leaving nothing that would help to sustain the robber bands while they continued to wage their unhallowed war. (A. C. 17.)

When the people reached the gathering place they fortified it so strongly that it became impregnable to their enemies. Under Gidgiddoni's instructions they also made themselves strong armor and shields as well as all kinds of weapons, so that they might be fully prepared for the day of battle. Lachoneus, in the meantime, preached to them in great power, so much so that they feared his denunciations, forsook all their sins, and turned to the Lord in great humility and devotion.

Game soon became so scarce in the wilderness that the Gadiantons began to suffer for food while besieging the Nephite stronghold. In addition to this, the Nephites made frequent attacks upon them. Seeing his armies wasting away from famine and the sword, Zenmarihah, their commander, gave up all hope of success and withdrew from the siege, and formed the design of marching his followers to the most distant parts of the land northward.

To have permitted the robbers to escape would have increased the difficulties under which the Nephites had so long suffered. Gidgiddoni, the Nephite general, having learned of their purpose, and knowing their weakness for want of food and because of the great slaughter made among them through the successful attacks of his own troops, sent his armies to cut off their retreat. During the night they got beyond the robbers, who, when they began their march on the morrow, found themselves between the armies of the

Nephites. Many thousands surrendered, and the remainder were slain. Zenmarihah was taken and hanged to the top of a tree; which, when he was dead, the Nephites cut down. They then greatly rejoiced and praised God for his mercies and blessings in delivering them from their enemies.

The soldiers of Gidgiddoni succeeded in taking as prisoners all the robbers that were not killed. The word of God was preached to them, and those who repented of their sins, and covenanted to cease their evil practices, were set at liberty. The remainder were condemned for their crimes and punished according to law. This entirely broke up these bands of murderers and robbers, and peace and righteousness again prevailed (A. C. 21), but it was not until five years later (A. C. 26) that the Nephites returned to and possessed their old homes.

CHAPTER XLI.

THE LAST CHIEF JUDGE MURDERED AND THE REPUBLIC
OVERTHROWN—THE SIGNS OF THE SAVIOR'S DEATH
APPEAR—A TERRIBLE STORM—THE UNIVERSAL DARK-
NESS—THE UNPARALLELED DESTRUCTION—THE TER-
ROR OF THOSE HOURS.

THE NEXT year the laws were revised according to justice and equity. They had, doubtless, been violently tampered with during the times that the Gadian-ton robbers held control of the administration and elected the officers. Good order now prevailed throughout the whole land. Soon new cities were founded