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Chapter LXXXII

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CHAPTER LXXXII.

THE JUDGMENTS OF GOD ON THE JAREDITES—THE EXTINCTION OF THE RACE—THE HILL RAMAH—SHIZ AND CORIANTUMR—ETHER.

OWING to their gross and abounding iniquities, the Lord on several occasions visited them with partial destruction. These judgments came in the shape of fratricidal war, pestilence, drought and famine. In the days of Heth, who was possibly a contemporary of Solomon or David, there was a great dearth in the land, through which the inhabitants were destroyed exceedingly fast, while poisonous serpents came forth "and did poison many people." These serpents drove the flocks and herds south, and then congregating at the narrow neck uniting the two great divisions of the land, hedged up the way so that the people could not pass, thus adding another factor to their misery, for their crops were not only destroyed through the lack of rain, but the resource of animal food was taken from them. Thus they became a broken people, but when through their miseries they had sufficiently humbled themselves before the Lord, he sent the long desired rain, and there began to be fruit in the north countries and in all the countries round about. Other desolations at various times came upon them because of their defiant disobedience to the behests of Heaven.

The war which ended in the entire destruction of the Jaredite race was one of the most bloodthirsty, cruel and vindictive that ever cursed this fair planet. Men's

most savage passions were worked up to such an extent that every better feeling of humanity was crushed out. The women and children armed themselves for the fray with the same fiendish activity, and fought with the same intense hate, as the men. It was not a conflict of armies alone; it was the crushing together of a divided house that had long tottered because of internal weakness, but now fell in upon itself.

This war was not the work of a day; it was the outgrowth of centuries of dishonor, crime and iniquity. And as this continent was once cleansed of its unrighteous inhabitants by the overwhelming waters of a universal Deluge, and only eight souls left, so this second time, as a flood, though the promises of the Lord to Noah, was no longer possible, instead thereof the wicked slew the wicked until only two men remained, the king and the historian, the one to wander wounded, wretched and alone, until found by Mulek's colony: the other to record the last dreadful throes of his people for the profit of succeeding races, and then to be received into the loving care of his Father and his God. Both the Nephites and ourselves are indebted to him for our acquaintance with the earlier history of this continent, which otherwise would have been entirely shut out from our knowledge.

Some four or more years before the final battles around and near the hill Ramah, otherwise Cumorah, two millions of warriors had been slain, besides their wives and children. How many millions actually fell before the last terrible struggle ended, and Coriantumr stood alone the sole representative of his race, it is impossible to tell from the record that has been handed down to us, but we think we are justified in believing



ETHER FINISHING HIS RECORD.



that for bloodshed and desolation no such war ever took place before, or has occurred since in the history of this world; if the annals of any nation have the record of its equal, it is not known to us.

The duel between the leaders of the two contending hosts, when their followers were all slain, was a unique and horrible one. We will let the historian tell the story in his own words:

And it came to pass that they fought for the space of three hours, and they fainted with the loss of blood. And it came to pass that when the men of Coriantumr had received sufficient strength that they could walk, they were about to flee for their lives, but behold, Shiz arose, and also his men, and he swore in his wrath that he would slay Coriantumr, or he would perish by the sword; wherefore he did pursue them, and on the morrow he did overtake them; and they fought again with the sword.

And it came to pass that when they had all fallen by the sword, save it were Coriantumr and Shiz, behold Shiz had fainted with loss of blood. And it came to pass that when Coriantumr had leaned upon his sword, that he rested a little, he smote off the head of Shiz. And it came to pass that after he had smote off the head of Shiz, that Shiz raised upon his hands and fell; and after that he had struggled for breath, he died. And it came to pass that Coriantumr fell to the earth, and became as if he had no life.

Coriantumr, when he regained consciousness, wandered forth, aimlessly and alone, the last of his race. A whole continent lay round about him, but there was nothing, in any place, to invite him either to tarry or depart. Companions he had none; every

creature in the image of God, save himself, had moistened the soil with his life's blood. All had been swept into un sanctified graves or poisoned the air with their unburied bodies. The savage beasts alone remained to terrify him with their hideous calls as they held high carnival over the unnumbered slain. Weak from loss of blood, he staggered on, placing as great a distance as his failing powers would permit between himself and the horrors of the last battle ground. He passed onward through each deserted valley, each tenantless town; in neither was there any human voice to greet or chide him; the homes of his own people and those of his enemies were alike—a silent desolation; all the land was a wilderness.

How long he thus wandered to and fro, wretched, comfortless and forlorn, we know not; but at last he reached the southern portion of the northern continent, thousands of miles from Ramah, and there, to the great astonishment of both, he found the people of Mulek, who had been led by the hand of the Lord from Jerusalem. With them he spent his few remaining days, and when nine moons had grown and waned he passed away to join the hosts of his people in the unknown world of spirits.

All this was in fulfilment of the prophecies of Ether, who, years before, had been sent by the Lord to Coriantumr with the fateful message that if he and all his household would repent, the Lord would give unto him his kingdom, and spare the people; otherwise they should be destroyed, and all his household, save it were himself, and he should only live to see the fulfilling of the prophecies which had been spoken concerning another people receiving the land

for their inheritance; and Coriantumr should receive a burial by them; and every soul should be destroyed save it were Coriantumr.

But Coriantumr did not repent, neither his household; and all the words of the Lord, through Ether, came to pass; not the least of them remained unfulfilled.

