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The Alma Family (A Book of Mormon Sketch)

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Abstract: This series presents a life sketch of the Alma family, many of whom became prophets. The life of Alma the Younger is compared to the Apostle Paul—both were called upon to repent and became great missionaries for the Lord. The prophecies of Alma are among the most numerous, important, and interesting in the Book of Mormon, and his inspired advice to his sons contains many doctrinal matters. Helaman the son of Helaman, grandson of Alma, carried on the work of righteousness in spite of the Gadianton robbers. His son Nephi was a great prophet who paved the way for the visit of Christ in America. Nephi's brother Lehi and Lehi's son Nephi were also great leaders. The sixth part discusses Helaman, the son of Alma.

THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS' MILLENNIAL STAR.

"For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be earthquakes in divers places, and there shall be famines and troubles; these are the beginnings of sorrows."—MARK xiii, 8.

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THE ALMA FAMILY.

(A Book of Mormon Sketch).

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HELEMAN, THE SON OF ALMA.

We have no account of the date or place of birth of this prophet and general of the Nephites; but as his father's permanent residence was in the city of Zarahemla, it is not unreasonable to suppose that it was there that he first saw the light of day. He is not introduced to the reader of the Book of Mormon until he had arrived at the age of manhood (B.C. 75), when it is stated that Alma took his two younger sons with him on his mission to the Zoramites, whilst Heleman was left in Zarahemla, most probably to take charge of the interests of the Church in that land during the absence of the presiding high priest, his father.

When Alma returned home from this mission, he called his three sons to him, and gave to each his blessing and instructions. His admonitions to Heleman are recorded at great length in the inspired pages. Alma therein

reviews his own life and the history of the Nephites, prophesying many things with regard to the future of that people. He also exhorts Heleman to be diligent as a preacher of God's holy word, and to an individual life of righteousness as an example to the Church. At this time he likewise gave him strict charge with regard to the keeping of the records, to continue the annals of the nation thereon, to preserve them sacred, and to prevent certain portions (containing the secret oaths, covenants and other works of darkness of the Jaredites,) being published to the world, lest others be ensnared by the same abominations.

After receiving their separate instructions, Heleman, as also his two brothers and their father, went forth among the Nephites, declaring the word according to the spirit of prophecy and revelation, and they preached after the holy order of God, by which they were called.

In the year following the Lord took Alma, as he had previously taken Moses. The prophet, being doubtless, aware of his speedy departure from this dwelling-place of humanity (as was Elijah), took his son Heleman, and having received the latter's confession of faith in the coming of the Christ, he blessed him, and prophesied of things that should occur even until the people of Nephi should become extinct. Having done this, he blessed the Church and its faithful members, and departed out of the land, never by mortal eyes to be seen again. His son Heleman and others then went through the cities of the Nephites, and regulated the affairs of the Church; but owing to the pride of many who would not give heed to the instructions given them, nor walk uprightly, dissensions arose, which in after years led to numerous evils, amongst the greatest of which was a long-continued war, or series of wars, between the faithful Nephites on one side, and the apostates, and afterwards the Lamanites, on the other. Still, for four years Heleman and his associate priesthood were enabled to maintain order in the Church, and many died in full faith of the Gospel, and joyous hope of its never-ending rewards; indeed, during that period there was much peace and great prosperity enjoyed by those who remained faithful.

The leader of those who apostatized from the true faith and commenced to wage war against their former brethren, was named Amalickiah. He was one of the most ambitious, cunning and unscrupulous characters that ever disgraced American history. Being defeated by Moroni, the Nephite commander, and his army crushed (B.C. 73), he went over to the Lamanites, and stirred them up to anger against the race to which he belonged. For some time he was unsuccessful in this attempt, as the Lamanites had too lately received severe defeats to be anxious again to try the fortunes of war. By his craft, however, he removed every obstacle, until he was acknowledged the king of the descendants of Laman. Towards the end of the year his armies advanced into the land of Ammonihah, and

from that time the war was carried on with slight intermissions and with varying success for about thirteen years (to B.C. 60), when the Lamanites had been driven out of the possessions of the Nephites and peace was restored, which, owing to the utter prostration of the Lamanites, was not recommenced until the year B.C. 53, when they again made an incursion into the Nephite territory, but were speedily driven back to their own lands, suffering great loss. It was during this thirteen years' war that Heleman appears most prominently in the record of his nation, and in the annals of his life is contained one of the sublimest and sweetest episodes in Nephite history.

The war had been raging several years, and was working disastrously to the Nephites, when the people of Ammon, feeling that they were a burden rather than a help to their benefactors (though indeed they were not), desired to be released from their oath and covenant never again to take up deadly weapons of war against their fellows, that they might in this hour of extreme peril take up arms in defence of the liberties of their adopted country. From this rash step Heleman and his brethren dissuaded them, lest by so doing they should imperil their eternal salvation. But they had sons who had grown far towards manhood who had not entered into this covenant, and consequently were not shut off from participating in the dangers and the glories of the war. So with their fathers' and mothers' consent, faith, prayers and words of encouragement and commendation, two thousand of these youths were mustered into the Nephite army (B.C. 66). These striplings were all men of truth, faith, soberness and integrity, as well as being conspicuous for their courage, strength and activity. Being organized, they desired that Heleman, for whom they had great love and respect, should be their leader. He consented, and at their head marched to the relief of the forces of the republic that were struggling against considerable odds on the southern borders of the Nephite dominions, from the shore of the Pacific Ocean eastward. On their

arrival at the city of Judea, Heleman found the Nephite forces, under Antipus, the commander in that department, in a perilous condition. The Lamanites, at great cost to both sides, had captured the cities of Manti, Zeezrom, Cumeni and Antiparah, and were occupying the surrounding country. They were now threatening Judea, which Antipus and his troops, depressed in body and spirit, were toiling with all their remaining strength to fortify—fighting by day and working by night. Heleman placed himself and his two thousand under the orders of Antipus, to whom the reinforcement was most timely and encouraging. When the Lamanites learned of the increased strength of the Nephite forces in Judea, Ammoran, their leader, gave orders that it should not be attacked. This fortunate hesitation allowed the defenders time to complete the work of defence.

This state of affairs continued for some months, the Lamanites fearing to make any aggressive movement, and the Nephites not strong enough to retake any of their captured cities. Finally the Nephite commanders determined to try a stratagem to entice the Lamanites into the open field. Heleman and his youthful Ammonites marched out of the city of Judea towards the coast, apparently for the purpose of revictualing the neighboring city. Their course took them past the city of Antiparah, in which was stationed a large Lamanitish army. The commanding officer therein noticing the fewness of Heleman's corps, ordered the pursuit. Heleman immediately retired for strategic purposes northward, followed by the enemy. Antipus, who had been watching the course of events, closed in behind the Lamanites with the bulk of his troops, simply leaving in Judea what he considered a sufficient force to temporally defend it, should it be attacked in his absence. The pursuit grew into a race between the three armies. Heleman crowded with all speed into the wilderness, on purpose to draw the Lamanites away from their base, whilst Antipus was vainly endeavoring to overtake them. On the morning of the third day the Lamanites turned round and faced

the army of Antipus, when, owing to the fatigued condition of the latter's warriors, they were not able to withstand the Lamanite onslaught, but were put into confusion, and their commander and several superior officers were slain. At this juncture Heleman and his sons (as he delighted to call them,) arrived, and by their abiding faith, impetuous valor and bodily prowess, turned a disastrous defeat into an overwhelming victory, in which the Lamanite forces were partly destroyed, partly captured.

When, on the morning of the third day, Heleman found he was no longer pursued, he feared this movement was a ruse of the enemy to entrap his corps, and was undecided if he should return to possibly aid Antipus, or remain and await the progress of events. He called a halt, and explained the situation and his apprehensions to his young soldiers. He then inquired: "What say ye, my sons, will ye go against them in battle?" Without hesitancy they unanimously answered in the affirmative, saying: "Father, behold our God is with us, and he will not suffer that we shall fall; then let us go forth, we would not slay our brethren if they would let us alone; therefore let us go lest they should overpower the army of Antipus." Here Heleman remarks: "Now they never had fought, yet they did not fear death; and they did think more of the liberty of their fathers than they did upon their lives; yea, they had been taught by their mothers that if they did not doubt that God would deliver them. And they rehearsed unto me the words of their mothers, saying, We do not doubt our mothers knew it." They returned—the results were as stated above; and yet more, so great was their faith, so potent its workings, that when, after the battle, Heleman called the roll of his youthful heroes, not one was missing. The faith engendered by their mothers' words had borne fruit—they were all preserved. To their undaunted prowess, for they "fought as if with the strength of God," the Nephites unhesitatingly accorded the glory of the day. The battle ended, the victorious troops marched back to Judea.

Still the hardly-contested war continued. Six thousand men, with provisions, reached Heleman from Zarahemla and the regions round about (B.C. 63), besides forty more young Ammonites who had grown sufficiently vigorous to assume the hardships of military life. The city of Cumeni shortly afterwards surrendered through the want of provisions, their supplies having been continuously cut off by Heleman's troops. This surrender threw so many prisoners on the hands of the Nephites, that they were unable to guard or feed them. An officer named Gid, with a sufficient force, was detailed to convey them to Zarahemla, but on their way, passing near enough to an invading body of Lamanites to hear their battle-cries, the prisoners made a break and rushed to join their countrymen. In this attempt many were killed by the Nephite guards, and the remainder escaped. Gid and the escort having no further occasion for going on to Zarahemla, returned to Heleman.

His arrival was most opportune, for Ammoran, having received large reinforcements, suddenly attacked the Nephites, and was driving all their corps from their positions, except the youthful Ammonites, who stood firm as a rock, when the arrival of Gid and his company turned the tide of battle. The young warriors again received the warm praise of their father and general. They had remained firm and undaunted through all the perils of the fight, obeying and performing every command with the exactness and coolness of veterans. In the hottest of the encounter they never forgot their mothers' words, nor their heavenly Father's protecting blessing. Though in this fierce conflict, wherein they undauntedly bore the brunt of the enemy's savage onslaughts, every one was wounded, even that two hundred fainted for loss of blood, yet not one was slain, and their preservation was marvelous in the eyes of their fellow-soldiers.

After this battle the Nephites retained the city of Cumeni, whilst the Lamanites retreated eastward to Manti, which was situated on the upper waters of the Sidon. Nor was

it for several months that the city could be taken, as owing to internal dissensions at the Nephite capital, and the attempts on the part of some of the people to overthrow the republic and establish a monarchy, Pahoran, the chief judge, was unable to supply the necessary provisions and reinforcements.

In this strait Heleman and his fellow-officers called on the Lord in fervent prayer, which was not unanswered. They received assurances of deliverance and victory. These blessed assurances inspired fresh faith and infused renewed courage in the war-weary hearts of those not given over to the love of carnage. Fired with the determination, by God's grace, to conquer, they entered on a campaign against the city of Manti, which by strategy they captured before the end of the year (B.C. 63). The moral effect of this victory was so great, that the Lamanites retreated into the wilderness, evacuating the whole of the Nephite territory on the west, but unfortunately taking with them, as prisoners, many women and children. Such was the condition of affairs when Heleman wrote to Moroni, the Nephite commander-in-chief, who was directing the campaign on the eastern side of the continent, and it is from this letter that the above details of the war on the Pacific slope are condensed.

For more than a year Moroni could not send the needed help to Heleman. The rebels in Zarahemla had driven the chief judge out of the city, and he had taken refuge in Gideon. From there he wrote to Moroni to come to his assistance, which that officer did at the earliest possible moment, leaving the armies in the north-east under the command of Lehi and Teancum. As he advanced he rallied the people on his line of march to the defence of the liberties of the republic, and was so successful that, after having joined the chief judge, Pahoran, he succeeded in overthrowing the "king men," killing their leader, Pachus, and completely crushing the rebellion. This being accomplished, he sent 6,000 men with the necessary provisions to re-inforce Heleman (B.C. 61).

The campaign during this year,

along the Atlantic coast, was a decisive one. The Lamanites, in many stubborn battles, were driven from city to city, until they were driven out of every one that they, during the progress of the war, had captured from the Nephites. On the west coast they do not appear to have renewed hostilities. The consequence was, that in the next year peace was established in all the land, not a Lamanite warrior remained on Nephite soil. Then Pahoran returned to his judgment seat, and Heleman recommenced his labors in the ministry (B.C. 60).

The long-continued and savage war just closed, had brought various evils to the Church—in many parts of the land it may be said to have been disorganized. The occupancy of so many of the Nephite cities by the unbelieving Lamanites had produced numerous demoralizing effects: murders, contentions, dissensions and all manner of iniquity had become rife, and the hearts of the people had become hardened, yet not altogether so, for there were some who acknow-

ledged the hand of the Lord in all their afflictions, and these humbled themselves in the depths of humility; and because of the prayer of these righteous ones, the people were spared.

Such was the state of affairs when Heleman went forth to call the people to repentance and set the Church in order. In this blessed work he had much success, and with the help of his brethren he again established the Church of God throughout all the land. These labors he continued until the time of his death, and his joy therein was greatly increased by the continued faithfulness of the people, who, notwithstanding their abundant prosperity, which, as ever, followed their repentance, they remained humble, fervent in prayer and diligent in works of righteousness. Such was the happy condition of the people of Nephi when Heleman died (B.C. 57), he having survived his illustrious father sixteen years. And Stublon, his brother, "took possession of the sacred things that had been delivered unto Heleman by Alma."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

ANTI-JEWISH MOVEMENT.

The Jews have formed a conspicuous figure in the leading political movements of the European powers during the last few years. Numerous disabilities which stood in the way of the latter-day gathering of that people to Palestine have been in process of removal. The Lord, by manipulating the affairs of nations, is paving the way for that event, which even now appears to be in its first stages.

Simultaneously with those favorable signs there is a breaking out, in various parts of the world, of violent hostility to the Hebrew race. As we have heretofore stated, we do not look upon these persecutive demonstrations as unfavorable to the remnants of Israel, but otherwise. Vindictive persecution is hard to bear, but we "acknowledge the hand of God in all things," and if He is using the means as a whip to incite them to leave the lands where they are hated for that

of their forefathers, and if it should have the desired effect we cannot look upon these outbreaks of hostility as unqualifiedly unfortunate.

We have before alluded to the oppressive treatment the Jews were receiving at the hands of government officials in Southern Russia. We have also made mention of the movements of the Anti-Jewish League of Germany, which is supported by Professor Von Treitschke, the historian of the Empire. The active sympathetic aid of so eminent a person as he is likely to carry great weight, as he occupies a position in Germany similar to that which was held by Lord Macaulay in Great Britain.

The Moors are beginning to show a violent hatred toward the Jews. The following particulars, from the *Jewish Chronicle*, of a late outbreak in Fez, Morocco, will give some idea of the state of feeling prevailing there: