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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 twelfth part covers Nephi the disciple.

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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(A Book of Mormon Sketch).

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Thus passed away thirty and three years. The time had now come for the fulfillment of the prophecy of Samuel the Lamanite, when there should be darkness over the face of the land for the space of three days. On the fourth day of the first month of the thirty-fourth year, a great and terrible tempest arose, the horrors of which exceeded all others since the deluge. Huge tidal waves swept the coasts, swift cyclones and irresistible hurricanes mowed down forest, wilderness, city and tower, leaving blank desolation in their train; the earth trembled to its foundations, belched forth fire, uprose in giant peaks or sank in deep abyss. The whole face of the land was changed by these indescribable commotions. Some cities were burned, some sunk in the depths of the sea, some were entombed in the earth, whilst mountains covered the place where others had before stood. It is not our intention here to detail the horrors of the three days of mental and physical

darkness that followed the hurricane and the earthquake, nor to dilate upon the great and terrible mourning of the people for their kindred slain, their cities destroyed and their treasures lost. The mental horror of these black days was intensified by the fear that they had sinned away their day of grace, as they realized the tens of thousands of the dead had done. Then was heard a voice from heaven, crying, "Wo, wo, wo unto the people except they shall repent." That voice was the voice of the Redeemer, and he recounted to them the destructions, the tribulations, the sorrows that had come upon them because of their abominations, but added the pleasing news that they who survived had been spared because they were more righteous than those who had fallen victims to the fury of the storm. He bore record of Himself, of his sufferings and death—that he had given his life a ransom for the sins of the world—and many words of counsel and instruction he added to

his testimony for their future guidance. When the voice ceased, there was silence throughout the land for the space of many hours. Afterwards the voice of the Savior was again heard, repeating to the humbled Nephites how often he would have gathered and spared his people Israel, but they would not. Thus did the three days of terror pass away. At its close the darkness dispersed and the wailing of the people stopped, for their mourning was turned into praise and thankfulness unto the Lord Jesus their Redeemer.

The horrors of the desolation past was succeeded by the most glorious age in Nephite history. The extreme of misery was followed by a fullness of joy. The crucified Redeemer himself appeared and ministered among the people; with his own voice he explained the beauties and harmonies of salvation's wondrous plan. The simple, heart-reaching truths of the everlasting Gospel he repeated in the same plain and gentle terms in which he had taught his disciples at Jerusalem, and even greater truths did he announce and greater works perform, because of the more abundant faith of the Nephites. He also organized his Church in their midst, and called twelve disciples, who became his special representatives and the presiding authorities of his Church. These are to sit in the great day of judgment as the judges of the seed of Nephi, and be themselves judged by the Twelve Apostles whom he had called from among the Jews. First of these Nephite Twelve stood Nephi, who, by virtue of his seniority, his previous position or his great goodness, or perhaps all combined, was recognized by the Savior on various occasions as the foremost of his race. Nephi, at this time, was most probably advanced beyond the middle age of man, as he had held the records more than thirty-three years since his father's departure from this earth, and as that event occurred when the elder Nephi was quite aged, and Nephi was his eldest son, it is presumable that, if he were one of those who died when he was seventy-two years old, his day on the earth was not a long one after the departure of

his Divine Master.

Though Nephi had himself been baptized, and had in times past baptized many, yet a new dispensation being now opened, Jesus commanded the Twelve whom he had chosen to baptize all the people; he afterwards gave them power and authority to confer the Holy Ghost. Nephi was the first who was baptized among all the people; he then baptized the remaining eleven of his Quorum, which, having been done, they were filled with the Holy Ghost and with fire; indeed they were encircled around with fire which came down from heaven, whilst holy angels ministered to them the unspeakable things of the kingdom.

After the final departure of the Savior, we are told but little of Nephi's personal life. His son, Nephi, appears to have taken charge of the records almost immediately after these events, whilst another son, Jonas, was with his father, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve. It is not our business to argue whether Nephi was one of the three undying ones who remained to minister on the earth to the people of the latter days; that is hid from our knowledge, no doubt for a wise purpose. If he was, he lived through that most happy era of Nephite history, when all was righteousness and joy and peace throughout America's vast domain; he lived to suffer, with his two brethren, all the persecutions which the wicked, in later days, so frequently imposed upon these three favored servants of the Lord, and in the end he retired from the midst of mankind when overwhelming corruption again paralyzed the life of the Nephite nation. If he was one of the nine who passed away to the presence of their Savior and their God when twelve times six years old, he must have laid aside mortality under as happy circumstances as ever prophet or apostle died, surrounded by a loving, faithful people, amongst whom the practice of iniquity was a remembrance of the past. No ruffian hands cut short his life, or tortured his latest hours, but in the midst of the most holy peace he passed away to the glories of the eternal.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]