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## The Lamanites (A Book of Mormon Sketch)

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**Abstract:** This series sketches out the character of the Lamanites. Reynolds also writes concerning Sariah, Lehi's wife. The third part covers Lamanite history during the ministry of Alma and the sons of Mosiah and the subsequent conversion of the Anti-Nephi-Lehies.

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 LAMANITES.—(A BOOK OF MORMON SKETCH.)

BY ELDER GEORGE REYNOLDS.

[CONTINUED FROM PAGE 404.]

The events previously narrated have brought us to about one hundred and twenty years before the birth of Christ. We must now take a leap of thirty years, and introduce our readers to the Lamanites of the year 90 B.C. At that time the supreme sovereign of all the land was a descendant of Ishmael, but his name is not recorded. His son, Lamoni, reigned over that section of the country known as the Land of Ishmael, which we are inclined to think was situated east or south-east of that portion of the Land of Nephi in which the Nephites formerly dwelt. Another king, named Antiomus, exercised viceregal authority in the Land of Middoni, which lay between Nephi and Ishmael. The old, supreme king resided in the City of Nephi, which was the capital and central seat of government. Another large city was being built, adjoining the Land of Mormon, the place where Alma, about half a century previously, had established a Christian Church. To this city had been given the name of Jerusalem, in remembrance of the

City of the Great King, from whence its builders had all sprung. The Lamanites of this age had encroached upon the Nephites on both sides of the continent; they had crept up the strip of wilderness that bordered the great Pacific Sea, and were rapidly filling the wide extent of the east wilderness. The idle, nomadic habits of those who did not live in their cities required that they should, like their descendants, the present Red Indians, have vast hunting-grounds, and it became their natural policy to occupy all the territory that they possibly could.

By this time the Lamanites had been strengthened by accessions of dissatisfied Nephites, who had an uncontrollable penchant for migrating to the Lamanites when anything displeased them at home. The descendants of Amulon and his associates had also increased in numbers, and from their position as the teachers of the race they exercised a strong and unfortunately baneful influence among the race they were educating. Ano-

ther section of the Lamanite nation, about this time, steps into prominence—they were called Amalekites—were exceedingly hardened and faithless, and overflowing with hate towards the Nephites, from whom, it is not unreasonable to suppose, they were apostates. The native Lamanites, Amulonites and Amalekites conjointly built the great City of Jerusalem, and from the mental superiority of its amalgamated people it developed a precedency in works of evil, in intrigue and in stirring up strife with the Nephites. The more simple descendants of Laman and Lemuel were easily led by their sophistries and excited by their cunning, until they became the willing tools to execute all their villainy.

A number of devoted and inspired Nephite missionaries now appeared in the midst of the Lamanites. They were led by the four sons of King Mosiah, and for fourteen years they tarried and ministered among their dark-skinned and darker-minded brethren. Their mission produced a great revolution in Lamanite society. At first they passed through many scenes of danger, discomfort and suffering; they were cast out, imprisoned and tortured, but their lives, as had been prophesied, were all preserved. By and bye their faith, patience, courage and devotion triumphed, and they had the unspeakable joy of baptizing into the Church many thousands of their former enemies. All of the obedient ones, with one single exception, were literal descendants of Lehi's elder sons, whilst those in whose veins ran apostate Nephite blood rejected the Gospel message, fought it with all their powers, and ultimately were the means of shedding the blood of thousands of the Christian citizens of their adopted country.

The first person of note converted to God was Lamoni, King of Ishmael, and it was in his dominions that the first Lamanite Christian Church was built up. Lamoni was a tyrant as a monarch, but affectionate as the head of a family, and the incidents of his conversion, which are of great interest (285—294), again bring before us the strong feelings of love and attach-

ment in the family circle which was as abiding a trait of Lamanite character as was their ferocity on the battle field. A few years later the old king, though at first desperately opposed to the Gospel, was himself brought to an understanding of its saving truths, and from that time the work of the Lord prospered under the royal protection and encouragement.

But before this the Lamanites had made a disastrous expedition into the territory of the Nephites. A division amongst the latter people (B.C. 87) afforded an excellent opportunity for an inroad. A man named Amlici aspired to kingly authority, in which ambitious designs he was sustained by a numerous following. When defeated by the popular vote, "the voice of the people," Amlici appealed to arms and entered into secret negotiations with the Lamanites. The latter equipped two armies—one commanded by the king marched down the River Sidon, and headed direct for the City of Zarahemla, the other, a few days in the rear, proceeded down the east bank. The first army united with the Amlicites in the Land of Minon, about two days' journey south of Zarahemla, and suffered a terrible defeat at the hands of the Nephites under Alma; the other corps met with a similar fate a few days later. The loss to the Lamanites was immense, thousands were driven into the wilderness in the north-west, where most of them died of their wounds or from privations. The remnants retreated to their own land, and with them went those who were left of the Amlicites, who from this time joined the fortunes of the Lamanites, and gave additional strength to the apostate element who were all the time gaining influence and power at the expense of the original descendants of Lehi's rebellious sons.

No sooner had the old king embraced the Gospel and extended his powerful protection to its converts, than the apostates of Nephite extraction showed signs of active insubordination. They were determined that they would yield obedience to none, Nephite or Lamanite, who believed in the coming of the Messiah. The Lamanites who had

accepted the Gospel message were those who dwelt in the lands of Mid-doni, Shilom, Ishmael and Shemlon, and in the cities of Nephi, Lemuel and Shunnilon (305), whilst the Amulonites and their ilk, and the associate Lamanites whose homes were in the lands of Helam, Amulon, Jerusalem and the regions round about turned a scornful ear to the glad message. Their opposition to its teachings grew apace, and before long developed into open rebellion, dividing the Lamanite kingdom into two distinct communities. The Christians dropped the old name with all its abhorred associations, and the king chose for them the appellation of the people of Anti-Nephi-Lehi, that being the name he gave to his son, upon whom he conferred the kingdom. About this time the old king died (306).

We have now arrived at one of the most pathetic and glorious events in the history of Israel, one which sanctifies the Lamanite race with the powers of martyrdom, and, by the blood of the victims, washes its garments white from many a former sin. The Anti-Nephi-Lehis, convinced of the folly and sin of their past lives of bloodshed and rapine, and deeply penitent for all their former crimes, took their weapons of war and buried them deep in the earth, with an oath and covenant to heaven that they would never again, under any circumstances, shed human blood. Their integrity was soon put to the test, for the unconverted Lamanites, incited and led by the Nephite apostates, fell upon them, and with sword and spear massacred 1005 of their innocent, unresisting fellows. No opposition was offered, no vain strugglings occurred; the victims calmly but resolutely bowed before the assassins' steel, and rejoiced in the opportunity of showing their devotion to God, even unto death. The sacrifice of so many of their unresisting brethren brought a deep change of feeling in many of the rude Lamanites; they refused to be any longer the murderers of their kindred; they strove to emulate so noble an example, and more were added, that day, to the Church, than those whose spirits had ascended to the Great White Throne, and whose

blood smoked up to heaven as a testimony against traitors and apostates.

The intriguing apostate clans who hated the Nephites with a fiercer hatred than the Lamanites had done, as their pretended wrongs were of more recent origin, not being able to incite the people to fresh atrocities against their Christian brethren, managed to get up a Nephite invasion. They rapidly and unexpectedly marched along the western borders of the Nephite territory, and suddenly fell upon Ammonihah, whose worthless citizens they massacred without regard to age or sex, and then utterly destroyed the city by fire. They next marched to the neighboring Land of Noah, from whence they carried off many prisoners, among whom were great numbers of women and children. As they drew near the southern confines of the Nephite possessions, they were vigorously attacked and scattered by the Nephite general, Zoram. The captives were every one delivered, and the Lamanites fled to their own land, having accomplished the just decrees of an All-wise God in the destruction of rotten Ammonihah, but without having brought honor or substantial reward to themselves. Whilst thus smarting under the shame of ignominious defeat, and incited by the Amaleckites, they again fell upon the unoffending people of Anti-Nephi-Lehi, and again stained their hands with the blood of unresisting innocence, whom they no doubt felt sympathized with their Nephite fellow-Christians. It is probable that they would ultimately have destroyed the whole of this persecuted people, had they not, under the guidance of the heaven-inspired Ammon, left their homes and possessions, and undertaken an exodus northward. They threw themselves upon the generosity of the Nephites, who joyfully received them, and apportioned the land of Jershon for their inheritance. Thus ended the dynasty of which Anti-Nephi-Lehi was the last king, and the history of his expatriated people.\*

\* The Nephites gave to this people the name of Ammonites, in honor of Ammon, the son of King Mosiah, and the president of the mission to this race.

from this time, more properly belongs to the annals of the Nephites than to the Lamanites, whilst the history of the latter race is to a great extent the history of Nephite apostates who from this time largely held control and government.

When the exasperated Lamanites found the Ammonites had forsaken their homes to escape their unholy

vengeance, they gathered in pursuit. A battle ensued in the wilderness that separated the two nations, in which tens of thousands of Lamanites were slain and scattered abroad; there was also a tremendous slaughter amongst the forces of the Nephites (B.C. 77). But the invaders were repulsed and compelled to return discomfited to their southern homes (317—8).

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

## COMPANIONSHIP.

Drop by drop, drop by drop, our friends and acquaintances are filling up the cup of our character; stone by stone, stone by stone, are piling up the fabric of our character. Their arguments drop something into the cup, their opinions far more, their actions most of all. Have you not caught yourself, time after time, unconsciously repeating as your own the opinion a friend has just expressed to you, referring, in a difficulty, to the conduct of a friend under similar circumstances? Here, surely, was convincing evidence of the silent working of the leaven of example. Every day, and all day, in a thousand ways, palpable or subtle, the plastic clay of a young man's character is being shaped and moulded by those who surround him. Your associates in business you cannot, perhaps, choose. But you can carefully examine their character, so that you may be able to judge what kind of influence it is to which you are exposed when in their company, whether an influence to be courted or an influence to be resisted. The associates of your leisure you can, to a very large extent, choose for yourself—not your house-mates, of course, but the friends outside your home-circle. Choose intelligent friends as far as possible—friends whose conversation will inform you, and whose pursuits will elevate you. Literary and artistic tastes are well worth cultivating. It makes a vast difference to one's enjoyment of life whether a primrose is to one only a yellow primrose, as it was to Peter Bell, or a

holy joy and a tender mystery, as it was to Wordsworth. Have intelligent, cultivated friends if you can. But have religious friends, at all odds. If you can't have these, have none. By "religious" friends, I don't mean friends who are always talking about religion. There is such a thing as letting one's religion evaporate in talk. I use the word "religious" in its primary sense. *Religare* means "to bind fast, and a *religious* man is a man who is keenly sensible of the bond which binds him fast to God, who thinks, and feels, and acts under the *obligation* of his relationship to God. Ogilvie, deriving it apparently from *religere*, not from *religare*, yet gives a beautiful definition of the word *religious*, "loving and reverencing the Supreme Being, and obeying His precepts." Choose, then, religious friends. One word more. Influenced yourself by the conversation and actions of those around you, your own conversation and actions influence them. Make up your mind that, with God's help, yours shall be a pure and wholesome and manly influence. Make up your mind that no companion shall date his first steps in profanity, ribaldry, flippancy, from the beginning of his intimacy with you. Make up your mind that your example shall be, not a will-o'-the-wisp, luring travelers to the Slough of Despond, but a light—farthing rush-light though it be—pointing the way to the City of the Great King.—*Excelsior*.