



Type: Magazine Article

---

## The Lamanites (A Book of Mormon Sketch)

Author(s): George Reynolds

Source: *The Latter-Day Saints' Millennial Star*, Vol. 42, No. 30 (26 July 1880)

Published by: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Page(s): 465–467

---

**Abstract:** This series sketches out the character of the Lamanites. Reynolds also writes concerning Sariah, Lehi's wife. The sixth and final part concludes the series.

# THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS' MILLENNIAL STAR.

No. 30, Vol. XLII.

Monday, July 26, 1880.

Price One Penny.

## THE LAMANITES.—(A BOOK OF MORMON SKETCH.)

BY ELDER GEORGE REYNOLDS.

[CONCLUDED FROM PAGE 452.]

After the glorious appearing of the crucified Redeemer in the Land Bountiful, and during the universal reign of righteousness that followed, the hated name of Lamanite was never heard, only as the people may have sadly referred to the iniquities of old. But in the days of Amos, a very few revolted from the Church and took upon themselves the name of Lamanites; thus there began again to be Lamanites in the land (545). Their numbers were but few and their influence was unnoticed, yet they were the precursors of unnumbered hosts who in after years followed in their wake. From their day iniquity raised its frightful head, and in a short time (A.C. 201) the unity of the Christian Church was dissevered, and false creeds, dogmas and institutions once more found place; these led to gross, inhuman idolatry, and the state of those who accepted them was worse than that of the Lamanites of old.

In the year A.C. 231, a great division occurred, and the people were again divided into two strong con-

tending bodies, who assumed the old names of Nephites and Lamanites.\* But there was a great difference between these opposing races and those who had borne the same name in centuries past. The Nephites of this age were the true believers in Christ, whilst the new Lamanites, (whatever their pedigree) had not dwindled in unbelief, but had wilfully and knowingly rebelled against the truth, whilst their children, through the wickedness and abominations and false teachings of these fathers, dwindled in everything that was good—in knowledge, in handicraft, in civilization, and also in beauty; for now they were a white and lovely people, but soon the old skin of darkness—the fit companion of their filthy habits and the mark of God's displeasure—came upon them (547). Nor were they alone in their iniquity, the Nephites soon followed

\* It is worthy of note that the Mexicans of the days of Montezuma and Cortez dated the commencement of their race and national existence from this very same year.—See Mexican Calendar Stone.



in the same path, the Gadianton robbers re-appeared, the land was full of violence, and the inspired recorder was compelled to confess (A.C. 306) that "there were none that were righteous save it were the disciples of Jesus."

Still active hostilities did not break out for some time; but when war commenced, it scarcely ceased until that great battle near Cumorah, which brought extinction to the Nephite race. This war, or series of wars, was one of peculiar horrors. All the old savagery, ten times intensified, was rekindled, transforming the combatants into fiends. Each race seems to have striven to out-rival the other in its bloody and infernal inhumanity. Mormon, the Nephite prophet-general, in an epistle to his son, Moroni, sorrowingly relates the fate of the Nephite prisoners—men, women and children—taken at Sherrizah (619). He adds: "And the husbands and fathers of those women and children they (the Lamanites) have slain; and they feed the women upon the flesh of their husbands, and the children upon the flesh of their fathers; and no water save a little do they give them. And notwithstanding the abomination of the Lamanites, it doth not exceed that of our people in Moriantum. For behold, many of the daughters of the Lamanites have they taken prisoners; and after depriving them of that which was most dear and precious above all things, which is chastity and virtue; and after they had done this thing, they did murder them in a most cruel manner, torturing their bodies even unto death; and after they have done this, they devour their flesh like unto wild beasts, because of the hardness of their hearts; and they do it for a token of bravery." Such was the horrible condition into which open, willful, determined rejection of the Gospel had brought both races.

We will not harrow up the feelings of the reader with the details of this last, long-continued agony. Suffice it to say, war broke out A.C. 322. At first the Nephites were victorious, and active hostilities were not resumed until A.C. 326. The fortune of war rested triumphantly first on one army,

then on the other. The name of the Lamanite king was Aaron, whilst the youthful Mormon led the armies of Nephi. After a continuance of this most sanguinary conflict, which extended all over the land with the most variable results, a treaty was patched up (A.C. 350), by which it was agreed that the Nephites should hold all North America, and the Lamanites possess the whole Southern Continent, the Isthmus of Panama being the dividing line between the two nations. A peace of ten years followed, when the Lamanitish king invaded the Land Desolation. Year by year the horrors increased, until by mutual agreement the remnants of Nephi gathered in one vast body, met their foes at Cumorah, fought with the desperation of despair, and were overwhelmed and annihilated (A.C. 385).

The Lamanites were now rulers of the western world, their traditional enemies being utterly destroyed. But they did not cultivate peace, and no sooner were the Nephites obliterated, than they commenced fighting among themselves. The lonely Moroni (A.C. 400) tells us that "the Lamanites are at war one with another; and the face of the land is one continued round of murder and bloodshed, and no man knoweth the end of the war." And again, yet later, he writes: "their wars are exceeding fierce among themselves."

Such was the sad condition of the Lamanite race in the early part of the fifth century after Christ. Here the inspired record closes; henceforth we have nothing but uncertain tradition. The various contending tribes, in their thirst for blood so long gratified, sunk deeper and deeper into savage degradation; the arts of civilization were almost entirely lost to the great mass of the people. Decades and centuries rolled by, and after a time, in some parts, a better state of things slowly uprose. In Central America, Mexico, Peru, etc., the foundations of new kingdoms were laid, in which were gradually built up civilizations peculiarly their own, but in many ways bearing record to the idiosyncracies of their ancient predecessors. Of this we have here little to do; many of their traditions (though dis-



regarded by mankind) bear unequivocal testimony to the truth of the Book of Mormon, and we have the joyous assurance that as the words of their ancient prophets, recorded therein, have been fulfilled to the letter in their humiliation, and as they have drunk to the dregs from the cup of the bitterness of the wrath of God, so is the glorious day now dawning when the light of the eternal Gospel shall illumine the hearts of their descendants, fill them with the love of God, renew their ancient steadfastness and faith, and make them the fitting instruments in His hands of accomplishing all His holy purposes with regard to them, in which also shall be fulfilled all the gracious, glorious promises made by Jehovah to this transplanted branch of the olive tree of Israel.

### A WORD OF ADVICE.

The gathering of the Saints from all parts of the world is a prominent feature of the latter-day dispensation. It was predicted by most of the ancient prophets, and is being accomplished by the people of God to-day. All members of the true Church of Christ are interested in "the gathering of the elect from the four winds"—from the east and the west, from the north and the south.

The anxiety felt by many of the Saints in Utah, to assist in the gathering of their friends and relatives from the Old World, is very commendable. It is a labor of love as well as a duty, and they who engage zealously in the good work will in no wise lose their reward.

But there is one thing that should be clearly understood by all who wish to aid in the emigration of the poor from abroad. That is, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is not engaged in a general, indiscriminate emigration business. The object in view in chartering vessels and contracting for trains is, the gathering of the Saints, in accordance with the revelations of God, and His commandments to His people. We do not desire to use the order of the priesthood and the influence of our organization in bringing from afar to the home of the Saints, people who have no faith in our principles, and no interest in common with our Church members.

Some people have an idea that we send our elders abroad to gather up as many persons as possible and induce them to come to Utah, like general emigration agents. This is a

very great mistake. The work of the gathering is incidental to the preaching of the Gospel, and our missionaries labor for the convincing and converting of souls who, when the spirit of this work rests upon them, at once desire to gather to Zion, and the elders, by virtue of their calling, act as guides and protectors to those who wish to come unto "the tops of the mountains" to learn further of God's ways and "walk in His paths."

In the work of the gathering it is only to be expected that some who are not of us will join in with us for a season for sinister motives, or "for the loaves and fishes." But there is no need for lending intentional assistance to such persons. We must put up with the disappointment of finding that some, of whom we hoped better things, turn their backs on the truth and make shipwreck of their faith. But we need not purposely spend our time and means in helping to bring people here who will only prove discordant elements, and are not likely to assimilate to the body of the Church. It is not unfrequently the case that a good Saint here sends money for the emigration of some relative or friend in England, or other part of Europe, without knowing anything about the standing, or faith, or morality of the individual.

We advise care in this matter, for several reasons. In the first place, as we have shown, our mission is "the gathering of the Saints," not the emigration of the wicked. In the second place, our office at Liverpool is kept specially for this purpose, and its con-