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Predictions in the Bible Concerning the Book of Mormon

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Abstract: This article discusses Bible predictions that have been associated with the Book of Mormon—the prophetic blessings that Jacob gave Joseph and his two sons, the oracles in Micah and Isaiah, parts of Isaiah 29, Ezekiel 37, and John 10.

Predictions in the Bible Concerning the Book of Mormon

By Joseph Fielding Smith, of the Council of the Twelve

“Know ye not that the testimony of two nations is a witness unto you that I am God, that I remember one nation like unto another.”—II Nephi 29:8.

At the time of the building of the Tower of Babel the Lord led a colony of people to this western hemisphere and gave them His law for their government. They prospered and multiplied and became a great nation, possessing the land of America until some time subsequent to 600 years B. C., when they were destroyed because they had become corrupt. About the time of their destruction the Lord led other colonies of Israelites from Jerusalem to this land and gave it to them for their inheritance. They occupied the land until the fifth century A. D., when the greater part of them were destroyed because of their wickedness. The remnant that remained, cursed with a dark skin and having dwindled into savagery, divided and subdivided into tribes, or nations, and spread over the face of all the land.

These peoples, while they were in favor before the Lord, were greatly blessed. Their prophets taught them the principles of salvation, and prophesied as they were moved upon by the Holy Ghost. These prophecies and instructions were recorded on permanent records made of gold or other metals that would endure the ravages of time. The predictions were made by these prophets that these records should be preserved to come forth in the latter days, as the voice of one speaking from the dust, from ages past and forgotten, to the convincing of “both Jew and Gentile” that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

Nephi, one of the earliest prophets of the Israelitish colony, predicted nearly six hundred years before the Christian era, that when the records containing the history of his people should be revealed from the dust, it would be in a day when the people would “deny the power of God, the Holy One of Israel,” and they would say: “Hearken unto us, and hear ye our precept; for behold there is no God today, for the Lord and the Redeemer hath done His work, and He hath given His power unto men.” Again, many among them would say when presented with a new volume of scripture containing the his-

tory of the people of this western world: "A Bible! A Bible! We have got a Bible, and there cannot be any more Bible."

Because of this attitude towards this new record the Lord promised to raise up "as many witnesses as seemeth him good," to establish his word; and "wo be unto them that rejecteth the word of God!" In that day when these things should be accomplished the Lord would proceed to do a "marvelous work and a wonder" which would prove to be a testimony against those who "seek to hide their counsel from the Lord." Moreover, this new volume of scripture was to be a witness, not only for Christ and to contain the everlasting Gospel, but was also to be a witness for the Jewish scriptures—the Bible; and these two records—according to the prophesying of Nephi, his father, and also Joseph, son of Israel—were to grow together bearing testimony of the everlasting Gospel. As such a witness these records stand today testifying of the truth to the condemnation of all who reject their teachings.

It is reasonable to believe that if the Book of Mormon contains the message of salvation as given to the ancient peoples of this continent, and as a witness for the Bible, there also must be some inspired utterances in the Bible bearing witness to the Book of Mormon. If there were no such references there would be a serious defect in the testimony of the record of the Nephites. Many passages of this kind are in the Bible, and from among them some of the most striking are here presented.

There is strong presumptive evidence in the blessings given by Israel to his son Joseph, and his grandsons Ephraim and Manasseh, as recorded in Genesis, that they were to inherit a land far from Jerusalem and become a multitude of nations. Joseph was promised that his inheritance should be to the "utmost bounds of the everlasting hills;" that he was "a fruitful bough by a well whose branches run over the wall." Moreover, he was to receive a greater inheritance than his progenitors, who were given the land of Palestine.

The Book of Mormon is the record of the descendants of Joseph who were led across the "great waters" to inherit this western land, which land is designated as being choice above all other lands. Surely these blessings could not be realized in Palestine. Joseph and his sons did not become a multitude of nations there; the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh did not receive a more wonderful inheritance in Palestine than any other of the tribes of Israel. There the chief honors were conferred first on Benjamin and then on Judah. Here in America all these promises were fulfilled when the descendants of Joseph possessed the land given as their inheritance.

There are many references in the Bible to Zion, a land, or place, separate and distinct from Jerusalem. Such passages are found in the second chapter of Isaiah and the fourth chapter of Micah. It would be foolish to say that these references to Zion were to the hill in Jerusalem where David dwelt. Through modern revelation the Lord has made it known that the American continent is Zion. It is to be on this land that the city Zion, the New Jerusalem, shall be built. These predictions are clearly stated in the Book of Mormon and are in perfect accord with the writings of the Bible.

Ezekiel saw in vision the great nation of the Nephites, the house of Joseph, when he wrote by prophecy concerning the joining of the records of Joseph with that of Judah. These words, which are very significant are as follows:

The word of the Lord came unto me, saying:

Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions; then take another stick and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel his companions:

And join them one to another into one stick; and they shall be one in thy hand.

And when the children of thy people shall speak unto thee, saying, Wilt thou not show us what thou meanest by these?

Say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God, Behold I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him, even with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick and they shall be one in thine hand.

And the sticks whereon thou writest shall be in thine hand before their eyes.

It is very apparent that the Bible is the record, or stick of Judah; moreover that it does not contain a history of the nations which were to come of Ephraim and Manasseh. That stick, or history must be sought for elsewhere. And from whence, only in America? It has been declared by some that the Bible as we have it today fulfils this prediction, and that this commandment to Ezekiel was a local commandment to him, and he was to write and join the writings of the two nations of Judah and Israel and hold them forth before the people of his day. A careful study of this prophecy, however, reveals that this joining of the records was to be in the latter day, not in the time of Ezekiel, for the Lord commands him further as follows:

And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land:

And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all. * * * And the heathen shall know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore.

Joseph, son of Israel, writing by prophecy, predicted things in relation to his posterity in this western continent. It is recorded in the third chapter of second Nephi that the Lord said to him:

Wherefore, the fruit of thy loins shall write; and the fruit of the loins of Judah shall write; and that which shall be written by the fruit of thy loins, and also that which shall be written by the fruit of the loins of Judah, shall grow together, unto the confounding of false doctrines and laying down of contentions, and establishing peace among the fruit of thy loins, and bring them to a knowledge of their fathers in the latter days, and also to a knowledge of my covenants, saith the Lord.

One significant expression in the prophecy of Ezekiel is that the stick of Joseph and his fellows was to be in the hand of Ephraim. Ephraim was to stand at the head of the tribes of Israel in the latter days, according to his birthright. Joseph Smith, unto whom the record of the Nephites was delivered, and who translated it, is of the tribe of Ephraim. The Lord so revealed it. So are most of those who have received the Gospel in this dispensation. Therefore this stick of Joseph is in the hand of Ephraim, and by him has been joined to the stick of Judah, fulfilling the prophecy of Ezekiel.

One of the most important predictions regarding the Book of Mormon is that found in the 29th chapter of Isaiah. The prophet here speaks of a people who should be like Ariel, the city where David dwelt. They should have heaviness and sorrow and should be brought down to speak out of the ground, and their speech was to be low out of the dust, and their voice was to be as of one that had a familiar spirit. Later in this same prophecy Isaiah refers to the words of "a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned saying: Read this, I pray thee; and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed. And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying: Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned."

This prophecy was literally fulfilled when Martin Harris took copies of the engravings of the plates of the Book of Mormon to Professor Anthon in New York. Mr. Anthon answered Martin in almost the language of Isaiah, when he was informed that the book from which the characters were taken was sealed. Said he: "I cannot read a sealed book." How remarkable it is that Isaiah said that the *words* of the book were delivered to one who was learned, and that the *book* was delivered to the one who was not learned. How perfectly this harmonizes with the history of the case respecting Mr. Anthon and Joseph Smith!

At the time this should take place the Lord was to commence a marvelous work and a wonder because the people drew near to him with their mouths and with their lips honored

him, but their hearts were far removed from him, and their fear towards him was taught by the precepts of men. The marvelous work has commenced, and of all times in the history of the world, *now* is the time when the conditions of the people warrant the fulfilment of this prophecy.

One other passage of great import having reference to the people dwelling in America in early times, is the remark of the Savior in that beautiful discourse in relation to his death: "And other sheep I have which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd."

It is thought by some that he had reference to the Gentiles, but he said himself, that he was not sent to the Gentiles, but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. He must have referred to Israelites who were not in Palestine, and the visitation must have been one after his resurrection. There is no reference to such a visit in any of the four gospels, and the remark was made shortly before his death. When the Savior visited the Nephites he told them plainly that this reference to other sheep was a reference to them; but because of the hardness of the hearts of the disciples in Jerusalem his Father commanded him to make no further reference to the nation of Nephites while instructing the Jews.

Perhaps this reference to other sheep of the house of Israel and the work of the Lord among them, would have been stated more clearly if the people had been willing to understand. For the same reason many references to the Book of Mormon and the people of the Lord in other lands than Palestine were so expressed that their true significance was hidden. The Savior taught in parables many things so that those who were unprepared should not understand. Even today the people of the world, unaided by the Spirit of the Lord, cannot see the true meaning of these passages of scripture here presented. The reason for the discourses of the Savior in parables is equally applicable in the Dispensation of the Fulness of Times.

Bits of Philosophy

Humility is nobility.

An idle life begins with a giggle and ends with a grunt.

Ninety per cent of nervousness is just inflammation of the ego.

Worry is a super six imagination working overtime without pay.

A sure way to get rid of self consciousness is to become conscious of something worth being conscious of.

There are only two kinds of preachers who are tolerable; those who can't preach, and know it; and those who can preach, and don't know it.—*Nephi Jensen*.